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The Construction of Masculinity in Male Students' Talk on (Heterosexual) Rape in  
South Africa: A Discourse Analysis

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013

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## ABSTRACT

One in three South African women will be raped in her lifetime; the gravity of this issue makes investigating factors influencing rape perpetration a crucial endeavour. Drawing on a feminist post-structuralist framework, this study is based on the assumption that how masculinity is constructed in a given context may influence some men's sexually aggressive behaviour within that context. Six focus group sessions, each consisting of between four and six male university students (with a total of 30 participants) were held, in which the reasons for why some men rape in South Africa were discussed. Focusing on constructions of masculinity and heterosex, the data was analysed using discourse analysis based on the Foucauldian notion of discourse. The data was divided into three main sections, namely 'the Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive', 'Heterosex', and 'Masculinity as Power'. Consistent with previous literature, within the data the male sexual drive was constructed as being largely out of men's control, with men depicted as not being culpable for raping when they do not have access to consensual sex; when the victim is wearing revealing clothing; or when the victim is drunk. Heterosex was also constructed as having considerably different meaning for males and females, with a clear presence of the 'sexual double standard', in which men are praised for having sex whereas women are denigrated and seen as morally lacking. The rules of heterosexual conduct were also constructed as being mediated by culture, in ways in which it was argued ignore the individual rights and responsibilities of the victims and perpetrators of sexual violence. Having power was further constructed as the principle feature of masculinity, with rape being a means of attaining power. Therefore, men without access to power in other areas (primarily poor and/or black men) were depicted as being the most likely to rape. Rape was also seen as a response to women's empowerment, as well as a mechanism through which women that are "too proud" can be humbled, and was thereby constructed as a tool through which male power over women is maintained. It is argued that some of the constructions within the data are problematic in that they support racist, classist and patriarchal ideologies; often place the blame for rape entirely onto women, whose rights are at times ignored; and remove culpability from the perpetrators of rape. The findings of this study therefore demonstrate the importance of challenging accepted rape myths and underlying assumptions about masculinity and heterosex in order to address the issue of rape in South Africa.

*Keywords:* Gender-based violence; heterosex; masculinity; male sexuality; rape; sexual violence.

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## INTRODUCTION

The 22 year old was still sitting inside the makeshift bar in Soweto, when the police came for him. It was a few days before new year. According to witnesses, the man had just attacked and raped a 17-year-old girl at his table, but apparently considered the incident so trivial that he had not even tried to flee. Nor had anyone else in the bar, besides the alleged victim, thought of contacting the police. (Harding, 2013, unpaginated)

This anecdote, recounted by Andrew Harding (2013) in the *BBC* article entitled “Will South Africans ever be shocked by rape?” is a disturbing reflection of the extent of the problem of men raping girls and women in South Africa<sup>1</sup>. Rape in South Africa has reached epidemic proportions, with at least one in three women likely to be raped in her lifetime (Moffet, 2006) and more than one in four South African men admitting to having raped a girl or woman (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2011)<sup>2</sup>. Despite the rapist’s (and bystanders’) attitude(s) within this extract, rape is by no means a ‘trivial’ matter; in addition to the physical and emotional trauma victims are subjected to (including the risk of pregnancy), the HIV pandemic in this country further compounds this gross human rights violation inflicted on so many women.

Understandings of the factors influencing rape have varied greatly over the past century, differing with the historical context as well as the identities of both the rapist and the victim (Bourke, 2007). Much of the focus on rape prevention has been aimed at women, who

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<sup>1</sup> Although possibly sensationalised by the international media, this account reflects participants’ descriptions of rape in taverns in Soweto from Wojcicki’s (2002) study.

<sup>2</sup> In this study of a random sample of South African men across racial and socioeconomic groups (n = 1686), 27.6% admitted to having perpetrated rape, a further 16.8% admitted to having attempted but not been able to complete a rape, and in total 33% of the men interviewed had therefore raped and/or attempted to rape a girl or woman. Note the word ‘rape’ was not explicitly used in the data collection of for this study; rather, questions were used such as “How many times have you slept with a woman or girl when she didn't consent to sex or after you forced her?”



are urged to protect themselves by taking certain precautions, such as dressing conservatively and avoiding being alone at night outside of their homes. However, as Gqola (2007) argues, South African women “cannot escape gender based violence even when we play by [such] rules” (p. 121). This demonstrates the necessity of addressing perpetrators rather than simply potential victims when tackling the issue of rape in South Africa.

Much of the previous work on perpetrators of rape has focused on the individual pathology of the rapist (Bourke, 2007). Yet the search for clinical differences between rapists and the rest of the male population has proven largely unfruitful, with most men who rape being “indiscriminable from non-offenders” (Polaschek, Ward, & Hudson, 1997, p. 118). Susan Brownmiller’s (1975) seminal feminist text, *Against Our Will*, helped to shift the focus in part away from the pathology of rapists and onto what she argues is the political nature of rape, as a demonstration of the power relations between men and women. This gendered aspect of rape is reflected in the fact that globally as well as in South Africa the overwhelming majority of rapes committed are male-on-female<sup>3</sup>.

Lisak (1991) notes that within the context of the feminist conceptualisation of rape, “rapists were not seen as pathological deviants from social norms but, rather, as normal men who act out in individual dramas what their surrounding culture perpetrates intuitionally” (p. 242). This shift in focus thereby enabled the connection to be made between masculinity and rape, a relationship first explicitly referred to in Wilhelm Reich’s (1945 as cited in Brownmiller, 1975) briefly articulated vision of a “masculine ideology of rape” (p. 13). The logic behind this link is aptly summarised by Russell (1975): “Being aggressive is masculine, being sexually aggressive is masculine; rape is sexually aggressive behaviour; therefore rape is masculine behaviour” (p. 261). Although conceptualisations of ‘masculinity’ differ, in much of the literature the concept of masculinity can be seen as referring to a set of traits and behaviours considered normal, acceptable, or desirable for men in a given society. Over the past few decades, there is a significant body of research which has demonstrated in varying ways the considerable link between masculinity and sexually aggressive behaviour.

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter, unless otherwise specified, the term ‘rape’ will be referring to male-on-female rape, i.e. rape where the perpetrator is male and the victim female.

Taking into account this relationship and drawing on feminist post-structuralism as a framework, this dissertation is based on the premise that how masculinity is constructed in relation to rape in a given society may influence the sexually aggressive behaviour of certain men within that society. Considering the high levels of sexual violence perpetrated by men in South Africa, exploring the relationship between masculinity and rape within this context was regarded as an important endeavour and was the primary aim of this study, since only through exploring the complex dynamics of gender issues in this country can we begin to formulate a means of confronting this inherently gendered epidemic. Although psychopathology undoubtedly plays a role in some rapes, considering the proportion of men perpetrating rape in South Africa, it is pertinent to examine how discourses surrounding male sexuality might serve to *normalise* sexual violence (including rape) in this country.

This dissertation has been divided into six main sections. The first section examines the different conceptualisations of gender and masculinity, and addresses how masculinity has been constructed, particularly in South Africa. The second section alternatively addresses previous research on the issue of masculinity and rape, in order to demonstrate the importance of exploring this relationship. The third section describes the specific aims and research questions of the current study. I then discuss the theoretical framework and the methodology of the study, and in the fifth section the study findings are presented. In the final section, I address the limitations of the study, as well as give an overview of problematic discourses utilised by participants and consider the implications of the findings for addressing the issue of rape in South Africa.

## **GENDER, MASCULINITY IDEOLOGY, AND MASCULINITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In this section I will address some of the theoretical issues regarding different conceptualisations of gender and how these relate to the concept of masculinity. Thereafter I will examine some of the common features of masculinity ideology identified in the literature. Finally, I will discuss some of the research on masculinity in South Africa in order to contextualise the current study.

### **Different conceptualisations of gender**

An important element of the concept of masculinity is its relation to different conceptualisations of gender. In order to understand this concept as well as its implications for sexually aggressive behaviour, it is necessary to look at both the essentialist and social constructionist accounts of gender and their theoretical and practical implications for the term ‘masculinity’.

**The essentialist account of gender.** The most widely accepted view of gender, and the view propagated by much of Western psychology, is the essentialist account (Gavey, 1989; Cosgrove, 2003). From this perspective, men and women are different due to stable, internal traits or ‘essences’ that make them inherently ‘male’ or ‘female’. One of the most common essentialist beliefs is referred to as ‘biological determinism’, which posits that gender is simply a product of biological sexual differences between men and women. Within the essentialist account, ‘masculinity’ can be seen as referring to those traits or characteristics naturally or inherently belonging to those in the category ‘male’. Therefore, from this perspective, if sexual aggression is seen as ‘masculine’ it is thereby regarded as a natural or inherent characteristic of men.

Bohan (1993) argues that essentialist arguments are “[b]oth methodologically and theoretically [...] grounded in problematic universalising assumptions” (p. 8). Despite the overwhelming acceptance of the essentialist account of gender, a meta-analysis of empirical research on gender differences found that almost all of the traditionally taken-for-granted gender differences have little or no evidence to support them (Hyde, 2007). It is further argued that even the “biological dichotomy between male and female is the product of the social construction of simplicity where complexity exists” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007, p. 5). This account also homogenizes males and females within their categories, making members of each group not possessing the prescribed group traits seem abnormal or lacking (Bohan, 1993). From a feminist perspective it is also problematic in that it enables the construction of masculinity as superior to femininity and men as superior to women. Shefer (2004) argues

that the focus on difference has thus been used to “obscure the power inequality between men and women and to legitimate ideologically the continued reproduction of such difference (and inequality)” (p. 190).

**The social constructionist account of gender and ‘doing gender’.** An alternative account of gender is the social constructionist approach, which is the account that I will be drawing on in this dissertation. From this perspective, “the ‘real’ nature of male and female cannot be determined” (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988, p. 456), and it is argued that, that which society views as ‘knowledge’ about gender differences is rather a socially constructed version of reality. Gender is not viewed as an internal, inherent trait of individuals, but as a construct that exists within social contexts considered gendered, distinguishing certain ways of behaving considered appropriate for men and women in society (Bohan, 1993). This is useful for feminist research not only in that it avoids some of the pitfalls of the essentialist account, but since it can also account for the diversity of experiences, traits and behaviours of men and women in different contexts and situations. Masculinity from this perspective can be seen as a set of traits and characteristics considered appropriate or desirable for men in a given society or context. As Ratele (2008) argues; “masculinity needs society, not just testicles” (p. 3).

The dominance of the essentialist account is, however, important to consider, as this is what gives constructions of masculinity their strength. As noted by Kaufman (1998), “masculinity is terrifyingly fragile because it does not really exist in the sense we are led to think it exists; that is, as a biological reality” (p. 7). This means that men must constantly prove their manhood, both to themselves and to others, thus putting pressure upon males to conform to certain constructions of masculinity (Kaufman, 1994, Kimmel, 1994).

Further useful in conceptualising how constructions of gender come to be produced in behaviour is West and Zimmerman’s (1987) account of ‘doing gender’, in which it is argued that gender “is the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category” (p. 127)<sup>4</sup>. In this account, gender

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<sup>4</sup> Similar but not equivalent to this is the idea of a sex role, which is described as “any pattern of behaviours which a given individual in a specified (set of) situations(s) is both: (1) expected and (2) encouraged

exists both in one's own activities and in one's perceptions of others' behaviours, and in direct contrast to the essentialist account, gendered behaviours are not seen as reflecting inherent traits or characteristics, but rather as being "interactional portrayals of what we would like to convey about sexual natures" (ibid, p. 130). These authors point out that the 'doing' of gender in turn serves to reify and reinforce essentialist views of gender as 'natural', since "[d]ifferences between women and men that are created by [doing gender] can then be portrayed as fundamental and enduring dispositions" (ibid., p. 146). In such a way, males and females 'doing gender' in ways which reflect the patriarchal social order "is a powerful reinforcer and legitimator of hierarchical arrangements" (ibid., 146). The relationship between constructions of masculinity and behaviours reflecting such constructions is therefore seen as being dialectical.

If we consider the social constructionist account of masculinity in conjunction with the notion of 'doing gender', as well as the dominance of the essentialist account, we can reason that the ways in which masculinity is constructed will have considerable implications for the behaviour of those that fit into the category of male<sup>5</sup>. Constructions of masculinity are thus important to explore in relation to the issue of sexually aggressive male behaviour.

**Characteristics of masculinity ideology.** Considering masculinity is socially constructed, its characteristics differ in different societies and contexts. This provides a challenge for working with the notion of masculinity, as characteristics associated with masculinity in one context may not be applicable to others. However, considerable overlap has been found between constructions of masculinities in different contexts, with

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and/or trained to perform" (Brannon, 1976, p. 5, italics in original). Although the notion of sex roles has been critiqued for its lack of attendance to issues of power (e.g. Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985) it is still somewhat useful in that traits of men and women are seen as predominantly socialized and therefore not inherent, and researchers using it often describe elements of what may also be referred to as characteristics of men in masculinity ideology.

<sup>5</sup> Use of the term 'male' has been criticised as depicting gender in a biological, essentialist way (Kaufman, 1994), however its use within this dissertation is simply to describe boys/men in a single term (likewise for 'female' and girls/women).

globalisation and access to global media in contemporary times providing further opportunities for different masculinities to influence each other in various ways (e.g. see Stadler, 2008; Viljoen, 2008). Therefore it is somewhat informative to examine some of the traits that have been used to describe the masculine construct in various contexts.

Much of the research describing characteristics of masculinity has been done in the United States of America (USA). Brannon's (1976) influential and often-cited description of the traits associated with American manhood included four main prescriptions, namely: 1) "No sissy stuff" (repudiation of anything feminine); 2) "Be a big wheel" (importance of success and status); 3) "Be a sturdy oak" (emphasis on toughness, confidence and self-reliance); and 4) "Give 'em hell" (emphasis on violence, aggression and risk-taking behaviours) (Brannon, 1976, p. 12). Kimmel (1993) argues that these features "lead to a sexuality built around accumulating partners (scoring), emotional distance, and risk taking" (p. 142). Other features of masculinity identified in various cultures have been: violence/aggression (e.g. Bruce, 2007; Campbell, 1992; Cooper & Foster, 2008; Epstein, 1998; Mahalik et al., 2003; Moolman, 2004; Russell, 1975), winning/competitiveness (e.g. O'Neill, 1981), status (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Bruce, 2007), being the breadwinner (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Campbell, 1992; Niehaus, 2005), being the head of the family (e.g. Campbell, 1992; Hunter, 2005; Sideris, 2004; Niehaus, 2005; Ratele et al., 2007), success (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Cooper & Foster, 2008; Luyt & Foster, 2001; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neill, 1981; Willot & Griffin, 1997), wealth (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Bruce, 2007; O'Neill, 1981), repudiation of femininity (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Kaufman, 1994, 1998; Kimmel, 1993, 1994; Luyt, 2003; O'Neill, 1981; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David & Wrightsman, 1986), heterosexuality (e.g. Aoesved & Long, 2006; Herek, 1987, 1995; Kimmel, 1994; Morrell & Swart, 2005; Niehaus, 2005; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007), sexual virility (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Campbell, 2001; Hunter, 2005; Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008; Wood & Jewkes, 2001), risk-taking (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Cooper & Foster, 2008; Mahalik et al., 2003; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007), fearlessness/bravery (e.g. Campbell, 1992; Campbell, 2001), strength (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Luyt, 2003; Viljoen, 2008), repression of emotion (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Luyt, 2003; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neill, 1981), power/dominance (e.g. Cooper & Foster, 2008; Hood, 1995; Kaufman, 1994, 1998; Kimmel, 1993, 1994; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neill, 1981; Sideris, 2004; Wood & Jewkes, 2001), and self-reliance (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Mahalik et al., 2003).

In different contexts different elements of masculinity ideology may become salient to individuals, and in times where certain ideals cannot be attained more emphasis may be

placed on those elements that are potentially achievable (Bruce, 2007). Notions of masculinity in any given society are also somewhat fluid, and elements of masculinity interact with different aspects of identity (e.g. class, race, culture), which has led some to refer to ‘masculinities’<sup>6</sup> (Connell, 1995). However, Ratele (2008) argues that although there may be multiple constructions of masculinity, “the number of masculinities available in a particular culture or whole world is not infinite [and therefore] there is a limited quantity of positions an individual [male] can take in regard to the idea of being a man” (p. 7).

Although the abovementioned list of traits is neither meant to encompass all elements of the construction of masculinity nor to be considered universally applicable, it is nonetheless useful when looking at the research on masculinity and rape to have an idea of what researchers have found to be characteristics of masculinity in certain contexts. However, since masculinity is shaped differently within different historical and material contexts, before addressing the literature on masculinity and rape in general I will first turn to research pertaining specifically to masculinity in South Africa, in order to better contextualise the current study.

### **Masculinity in South Africa**

Analysis of the data from this study revealed that several different aspects of masculinity construction within South Africa were seen as being indirectly related to rape perpetration in the country, therefore this section provides a broad overview of the general research on masculinity in South Africa. As mentioned, important factors that influence masculinities are language, culture, race, age, class and so forth, therefore given the diversity of these intersections in South Africa it makes sense to refer to “the range of masculinities in South Africa” (Morrell, 2001, p. 3). It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide detailed descriptions of the historical development of each masculinity ideology (see Morrell, 1998). However, to contextualise the current data it is useful to provide an overview of the history of constructions of masculinities for different groups in South Africa as well as to

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<sup>6</sup> In discussing the literature I will refer to both ‘masculinities’ as well as ‘constructions of masculinity’, given that both appear extensively.

present some contemporary research findings. The groups discussed in this section, and the depth in which each is examined, reflect both the literature on the topic as well as their representation within the data, hence the relative emphasis on constructions of black<sup>7</sup> masculinity. In looking at these constructions, it is important to note that “[t]here is not [...] one, monolithic version of white masculinity and another, different, but still monolithic version of black masculinity” (Epstein, 1998, p. 52), and labelling them as such contributes towards the reification of these constructions. However, it is nonetheless useful to identify features of masculinity construction pertaining to different groups in South Africa, while bearing in mind that doing so will inevitably oversimplify the matter (ibid).

One of the most prominent explorations of masculinity within South African research is Morrell’s (1998) examination of the historical paths of black (divided into black and traditional) and white (divided into British and Afrikaner) masculinities in South Africa. British masculinity, imported by the colonists, is seen by Morrell (1998) as carrying a construction of masculinity represented by “a willingness to resort to force and a belief in the glory of combat” (p. 616), and Afrikaner masculinity before the British invasion was argued to be characterised by authority over “women, people of colour and *uitlanders*” (p. 617). Morrell (1998) contends that differences between English and Afrikaans men existed and clashes occurred, however these masculinities eventually came to coexist relatively peacefully, influenced by the fact that they were united by being both men and white in a country where “white men alone had the vote until 1931, [...] white men were predominantly employers, law-makers, decision makers, heads-of-house, possessors of bank-accounts, possessed of jobs or in income-generating positions and provided with free and compulsory schooling” (p. 619). Furthermore, the national passion for sport (especially rugby) amongst white men may have helped bridge the divide, and the First World War provided a context wherein both the English-speaking and Afrikaans South African men “fought for their country and affirmed their roles as protectors of a particular way of life” (ibid, p. 619).

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<sup>7</sup> Within this dissertation I have not placed racial and gender terms into inverted commas, however I do acknowledge the socially constructed nature of these categories.



The historical development of masculinity constructions for black South Africa men clearly had a very different path, influenced by pre-colonial history, the colonists, and later by apartheid. Morrell (1998) argues that migratory work and urbanisation led to the division between what he refers to as ‘African masculinity’ and ‘black masculinity’. ‘African masculinity’ is argued to be those views of masculinity constructed as ‘traditional’<sup>8</sup> and upheld particularly in the rural areas, with importance placed on having a wife (or wives) and children, the accumulation of livestock, and being the head of a household or homestead (ibid, see also Campbell, 2001; Niehaus, 2005; Waetjen & Maré, 2001). ‘Black masculinity’, alternatively, is argued to be that version of masculinity fostered by urbanisation, with work and opposition to the state being central features (Morrell, 1998). Gangs would also have influenced constructions of urban masculinity, which was also seen as being affected by images of the *tsotsi* or gangster, who “looked to Hollywood for their symbols and developed a materialist and consumerist orientation” (ibid, p. 627).

During the apartheid era, urban youth are argued to have been more highly politicised than the rural elders (Campbell, 1992). Politics clearly had a significant role in identity construction during this time, and “what it meant to be involved in the fight for liberation [...] was significantly bound up in what it meant to be a man” (Waetjen & Maré, 2001, p. 198). Political parties and institutions also had an important influence; for example, Waetjen and Maré (2001) point out that Inkatha “tried to *mediate* the ‘two worlds’ of migrant life” (p. 203, original emphasis), with their leader Buthelezi’s speeches being, “organised around a central assertion: That masculine virtue was contingent upon loyalty to cultural traditions and, by extension, to Inkatha” (p. 201).

In sum, it is clear that age-cohort, migratory work, urbanisation, changing living conditions as well as political influences are all likely to have played a role in shaping notions

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that what is argued to be ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ is in itself socially constructed (Ratele, 2007, 2013). Representations of culture as rigid and unchanging can be seen as “reductive cultural discourses” (Ratele, 2007, p. 74), which are “well-served by patriarchal, tribalistic ideologies” (ibid), and thus should not be viewed uncritically by researchers of masculinity in South Africa (Ratele, 2013). This issue is discussed in more depth in the analysis section.

of masculinity for black South African men during this period, interacting with those ideas about what constitutes 'traditional' masculinity. Although the notion of 'African' versus 'black' masculinities cannot encapsulate all of the influences affecting masculinity ideology for black South African men, it captures an important theme in the literature, that of the pull of those values about manhood regarded as 'traditional' versus alternative, competing masculinities (Campbell, 1992; Morrell & Swart, 2005; Ratele, et al., 2007).

Socioeconomic circumstances are argued to have caused problems with achievement of masculinity ideals for many black South African men, past and present (Hunter, 2005; Niehaus, 2005). Many are unable to afford bride wealth or support families, therefore, 'traditional' masculinity in which these elements are important will elude them, creating "a vast discrepancy between 'constructed' and 'lived' masculinity" (Niehaus, 2005, p. 70). In direct relation to the topic of this study, Morrell and Swart (2005) posit that the inability of men in the 'Third World' to live up to the ideals of 'traditional' masculinity has led to a drop in their self-esteem to which the increase in rape in recent decades can be seen as one response.

Bruce (2007) suggests that an emphasis on consumerism in contemporary South African culture has further aggravated the issue, arguing that, "[in] South Africa, a variety of historical and contemporary social factors appear to have simultaneously contributed to creating both a premium on status and a socioeconomic context in which many feel unable to prove or improve their social positions" (p. 57). He further argues that due to an inability to attain masculine status through 'traditional' or material means, some men may come to use sex and/or violence as a means through which to gain respect.

Significant for the current study is the importance of heterosexual activity as an element of masculinity, which has been found in several South African studies (e.g. Campbell, 2001; Hunter, 2004; Niehaus, 2005; Ratele et al., 2007; Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007; Wood & Jewkes, 2001; Wood, 2005). For instance, Wood and Jewkes (2001) found in the Xhosa township studied that sexuality was an important part of young men's sense of their masculinity, particularly in respect to their peers. Vincent (2008) found that whereas in the past the traditional circumcision practiced within the Xhosa culture served to promote the ideals of responsibility and control, in contemporary practice the focus has become on "the right of access to sex as a primary marker of manhood" (p. 444). Having multiple sexual partners was also found to be an important element of masculinity construction in several studies (e.g. Hunter, 2004; Mankayi, 2012; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Hunter (2004) argues that in South Africa, "in the void by men's inability to work and

become *umnumzana*<sup>9</sup>, ‘success’ with multiple women has become a critical marker of manliness” (p. 139)<sup>10</sup>.

Access to sex, however, is also seen as requiring money (Hunter, 2004; Niehaus, 2005; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Wood and Jewkes (2001) found that many young women “actively choose partners who are able to provide them with food, money and clothes” (p. 323), and Niehaus (2005) argued that “[i]n Impalahoek, as elsewhere in South Africa, non-marital sexual liaisons have a large transactional component” (p. 68). This creates the situation where men lacking money might not be able to achieve ‘traditional’ or ‘consumer’ aspects of masculinity, yet their likelihood of achieving a sense of masculinity through consensual sex is also reduced. Such a situation can be seen as a breeding ground for sexually coercive behaviour amongst boys and men, where a male experiences a great deal of pressure to be sexually active and yet lacks the resources to secure consensual sexual partners. However, Jewkes and colleagues’ (2011) study found that “[f]ewer men who had raped were unemployed or had very low income, although a higher proportion reported that they sometimes or often went hungry due to lack of money” (p. 5), demonstrating that the relationship between poverty and rape is complex.

It has further been argued that violence has become endemic to constructions of masculinity in South Africa as a result of the high levels of (predominantly male-perpetrated) violence in South Africa’s recent and distant past (Andrews, 1998-1999; Campbell, 1992; Epstein, 1998). Violence, as an element of masculinity, is argued to have been influenced both by the institutions supporting and maintaining the system of apartheid as well as by the armed struggle against it (Andrews, 1998-1999). Furthermore, the legacy of apartheid’s structural violence continues to effect the youth today. For example, Cooper and Foster (2008) found in their study of 25 coloured male youths awaiting trial in Cape Town, that despite their being ‘democracy’s children’, “their masculinities carry the scars of a very

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<sup>9</sup> A head of household.

<sup>10</sup> It is however important to note that the notion of being a male that has multiple sexual partners (an *isoka*) is a view of masculinity that has more recently also come under criticism and been challenged by communities, particularly in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Hunter, 2004).

oppressive history” (p. 21). The authors argued that the hyper-masculine ways in which the participants depict their violence is “a reaction to the emasculation they experience through marginalization” (p. 20). In another study of participants from a coloured community in the Western Cape, it was found that violence was considered normal and natural for men within the community (Peters & Bawa, 2012). Therefore the violence that was endemic to the lives of many men during apartheid seems to have become an important element of the construction of masculinity in certain contexts within South Africa today, even for those men who did not grow up during the apartheid regime.

On a different note, it has been found that men in post-apartheid South Africa are also encountering alternative messages regarding masculinity to the constructions discussed above (Cooper & Foster, 2008; Malinga & Ratele, 2012; Mmatli, 2012; Salo, 2007; Sideris, 2004; Walker, 2005). For example, Salo (2007) found that in the coloured area of Manenberg in the Western Cape, in contrast to the violent masculinities present within the ubiquitous gang culture of the area, some men chose to exhibit masculine ‘toughness’ through religious lifestyles characterised by “stringent self-discipline [...] over themselves and their families” (p. 179) and the ability to resist the temptations of criminal behaviour. Alternatively, amongst black male participants in the Western Cape, Malinga and Ratele (2012) found constructions which included being a protector; a provider; a caregiver; a leader; a person who is responsible for his actions; and who treats his partner well. Cooper and Foster’s (2008) study also found that in addition to constructions of violent masculinities were masculinities characterised by “values of provide and protect, respect and discipline” (p. 13), as well as the discourse in which “it is acceptable for men to show vulnerability, relinquish control and portray behaviour that is not authoritative” (p. 15).

The challenge for men in confronting these different influences is clear. Mmatli (2012) found that her black, ‘born free’ (i.e. born after the end of apartheid) participants reported witnessing their “male parental figures’ struggle to make a transition from violent and aggressive freedom fighter to the emotional family man” (personal communication). Walker (2005) further found that men who did not prescribe to the ‘macho’ norm were sometimes referred to with “insulting and belittling” labels (p. 176). Therefore, although alternative, non-violent, gender-egalitarian constructions of masculinity may be available to South African men, the strength and status of such discourses will differ in different contexts and communities and may be met with punishment. Furthermore, Morrell and Swart (2005) argue that the “idea of the ‘new man’ was really developed for Northern, white, middle class, urban men [and] misses men in the Third World whose situations are different” (p. 101).

Sideris (2004) found that one way men had of coping with the changes was reverting back to “[c]ultural constructions of what it means to be a man” (p. 30), in which male authority is legitimised and men are provided with “a set of regulations that spell out the rights, duties and obligations that accompany paternal authority” (p. 30).

It is clear from this literature that masculinity in South Africa, as within any context, is by no means homogenous, even within different racial and/or cultural groups. It is shaped by the different cultures present in the country; the oppressive and violent history of apartheid; the socioeconomic circumstances in which people are located; as well as men’s individual histories and lived realities. Despite the complexity of these factors, this body of research gives insight into some of the issues and influences present regarding masculinity constructions in contemporary South Africa. Of particular importance for the current study are those constructions of masculinity relating to violence and heterosexual activity. Yet the barriers to certain other elements of masculinity which men may face are also significant, in that violence and sexual activity may therefore be emphasised as achievable ways of attaining masculinity (Bruce, 2007). Rape, as both a violent and sexual act, is thus likely to have an important relationship with constructions of masculinity in South Africa. This study has sought to explore this relationship in greater depth.

The current section has sought to give an overview of masculinity within the specific context of South Africa. Alternatively, there is a large body of literature which pertains more specifically to the connection between masculinity and rape, to which I now turn.

## **MASCULINITY, RAPE, AND HETEROSEX**

In this section I will contextualise the current study within the broader literature on masculinity and sexual aggression. In the first section of this literature review I will examine the literature connecting masculinity to rape and/or explaining the connection. In the second section, I will alternatively be addressing the construct of masculinity in what is considered 'normal' heterosexual<sup>11</sup>. I am doing this in light of Gavey's (2005) (and others') description of the vast 'grey area' between what is considered 'just sex' and rape, the existence of which means that studying rape independently of investigating 'normal' heterosexual leaves unexamined an important context in which masculinity may be constructed in ways that contribute to problematically coercive practices in heterosexual, including rape. I will therefore also be looking at literature concerning other sexually aggressive behaviours besides what is explicitly termed rape, considering that such behaviours can be viewed as being on the continuum between consensual sex and rape. Thus the following is a review of literature involving masculinity and rape as well male sexual aggression within the context of 'normal' heterosexual sexual encounters. The findings within this literature demonstrate the significance of the relationship between masculinity and rape, therefore establishing the importance of exploring this relationship, particularly in a context such as South Africa where the problem of sexual violence is so grave.

### **Correlational, Laboratory, and Explanatory Studies on the Relationship between Masculinity and Rape**

There have been numerous studies, conducted both internationally and within the South Africa context, on the issue of masculinity and rape. This section aims to give an overview of the studies aimed at finding or explaining this relationship.

**Correlational and laboratory studies on masculinity and rape.** There are several quantitative studies documenting the connection between masculinity and sexually aggressive behaviour in men. One prominent method of measuring these constructs is by correlating self-report measures of 'masculinity' (e.g. the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974)) with

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<sup>11</sup> I.e. sex between a woman and a man.

measures aimed at revealing sexually aggressive behaviour or likelihood of raping. Multiple studies using this method have demonstrated a positive correlation between measures of masculinity and self-reported sexually aggressive behaviour (Jacupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Koss & Dinero, 1988; Malamuth & Thornhill, 1994; Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Smeaton, & Byrne, 1987; Thompson & Cracco, 2008; Tieger, 1981). Similarly, men who score highly on scales of 'Hostile Sexism' (i.e. hold negative views about women as a group, which is encouraged by certain constructions of masculinity (see Aasved and Long, 2006)) are also more likely to report rape proclivity, particularly acquaintance rape (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Masser, Viki, & Power, 2006; Viki, Chiroro, & Abrams, 2006). In South Africa, Jewkes and colleagues (2011) found that self-reported rape perpetration was correlated with engaging in "a pattern of behaviours with female partners that has been identified as rooted in hegemony (sic) masculinity" (p. 8-9), in addition to being correlated with "gender inequitable views, adversarial and hostile ideas about women" (p. 8).

These studies may be considered limited because of their use of self-reports as measures of sexually aggressive behaviour, yet several studies provide evidence for the validity of self-report measures of sexual aggression. For instance, Malamuth (1981) found that self-reported likelihood of raping was positively correlated with greater aggression towards women in a laboratory setting. Similarly, Malamuth and Thornhill (1994) found that men with higher scores of Hostile Masculinity not only reported higher levels of sexual aggression but also showed greater levels of 'domineeringness' in conversations with women. Furthermore, Mosher and Anderson (1986) found that men with higher scores on the Hypermasculinity Inventory not only expressed greater likelihood of using sexually aggressive behaviour but also reported greater levels of arousal to guided imagery of a rape depiction.

Additional correlational findings relating to the relationship between masculinity and rape-related variables indicate that masculinity ideology endorsement may be linked to problematic perceptions of rape. Quackenbush's (1989) seminal study found that masculine sex-typed and undifferentiated males were significantly more supportive of rape than were androgynous males. Accordingly, Luddy and Thompson (1997) found that men's level of endorsement of traditional masculinity was negatively correlated to their likelihood of identifying the sexual assault described in a vignette as 'rape'. Locke and Mahalik (2005) also found that men's conforming to certain features of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Mahalik, et al., 2003) (i.e. power over women, dominance, playboy and disdain for gay men) was a predictor of higher scores on the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

(IRMA; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Furthermore, a meta-analysis across 39 studies found that 10 out of 11 measures relating to masculine ideology were significantly related to measures relating to sexual aggression (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002).

These studies provide evidence that individuals' endorsement of masculinity ideology is connected to their sexually aggressive behaviours as well as their problematic views regarding rape. This indicates the significance of masculinity ideology for males' perpetration of sexual violence.

**Explanatory studies on masculinity and rape.** The studies discussed above sought to demonstrate a relationship between measures of masculinity and rape-related variables. This section will alternatively discuss how researchers have tried to explain this relationship in various ways. Namely, I will discuss the conceptualisation of rape as a performance of masculinity as well as the notion of entitlement as being a mediator between masculinity and rape.

***Rape as a performance of masculinity.*** One of the important ways in which the relationship between rape and masculinity has been conceptualised is through describing rape/sexual aggression as a performance of masculinity (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Rose-Junius, 2005). There are several 'audiences' for which this demonstration of masculinity through rape is relevant: The perpetrator, the victim, women in general, and other men. More than one of these audiences may apply to any individual act of rape.

Firstly, a man's raping behaviour can be seen as a performance of masculinity for *himself*. This notion of using rape as a means of feeling masculine is coherent with the fact that rape is an enactment of several of the important elements of masculinity in many cultures (Russell, 1975), e.g. dominance, power over women, and sexual virility. Niehaus (2005) argues that, "as a violent performance, rape asserts the subjectivity and physical power of men whose status might otherwise be insecure" (p. 71). Accordingly, researchers in different contexts have argued that rape may be used in response to a male feeling his masculinity has been subordinated or marginalised: In school (Messerschmidt, 2000), by male competitors (Malamuth & Thornhill, 1994), or alternatively in the context of poverty (Baaz & Stern, 2009, p. 514). Similar arguments have been made to explain gender-based violence in general; for instance, Totten (2003) found that amongst marginal male youth, girlfriend abuse was used as a compensation for lack of access to other means of achieving masculinity (e.g. being financially secure), and Anderson and Umberson (2001) found that some abusive men claimed their actions were as a result of their partners emasculating them. However, Baaz and Stern (2009), as well as Niehaus (2005), emphasise that rape is simply a display of



masculinity, which does not in reality mend the issues which originally lead to the feelings of emasculation.

Secondly, rape can be conceptualised as a performance of masculinity for the female victim as well as for women in general. In terms of the latter, rape has been argued to be men's reaction to women's empowerment, as through rape men are seen as being able to regain some of their masculine status lost with their relative loss of power (Bourke, 2007, Everitt-Penhale, 2010, see also Morrell & Swart, 2005). In terms of the individual victim, alternatively, rape is seen as a means of demonstrating power as well as punishing insubordination. For example, in a study in South Africa and Namibia, it was found that rape was used in order to demonstrate men's power over girl children (Jewkes et al., 2005). Rape is also described as a means by which women who do not conform to their position in patriarchy (i.e. subordinate to and in service of men) are punished for their subversion (Moffet, 2006). This relates to the rape of women perceived as being either lesbian (Gontek, 2007; Morrissey, 2013) or as not behaving with subservience towards men (Beneke, 1995; Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Kanin, 1967; Moolman, 2004; Wood, 2005). The latter explanation for rape has been found in numerous South African studies (e.g. Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Moolman, 2004, Wood & Jewkes, 2001; Wood, 2005), with Mokwena (1991 as cited in Bruce, 2007) finding that rape was used to punish women who are "too proud" or "think they are too good" (p. 62). In line with these findings, Kanin's (1967) study found that "males sanction sex aggression (sic) when it functions as a means of social control to bring the deviant female back to conformity" (p. 502). Therefore rape of girls and women has been viewed as a performance of masculinity to individual female victims as well as in response to a perceived threat to patriarchal dominance by women in general. These studies reflect the feminist notion of rape being linked to power, with the gendered nature of rape serving as a reminder to women of their subordinate position in society (Brownmiller, 1975).

Thirdly, another site where sexual aggression can be seen as a performance of masculinity is in the context of men's relationships with other men, such as in male homosocial groups (i.e. social groups consisting solely of men) and friendships. It has been argued that there are powerful links between homosociality and masculinity (Kimmel, 1993), and male homosocial bonds can be essential components in how men shape their sexual relations with women, often in problematic ways (Flood, 2008; Gross, 1978; Kanin, 1967; Wight, 1994). Accordingly, Blanchard (1959 as cited in Yancey Martin & Hummer, 1989) noted that "group structure and processes, rather than individual values or characteristics, are the impetus for many rape episodes" (p. 457).

Research has shown that boys' may experience a great deal of pressure from their male peers to have sex (e.g. Wood & Jewkes, 2001), and some studies found that amongst male participants having sex was seen as important primarily for gaining esteem from peers (Gross, 1978; Wight, 1994). Kanin (1967) found that the more pressure to have sex men perceived from their peers, the more likely they were to admit to sexually aggressive behaviours as well as see to sexual aggression as more justified in certain situations. Furthermore, a South African study found that non-partner rape in particular was "associated with peer-related variables, including gang membership and peer pressure to have sex" (Jewkes et al., 2006, p. 2949). Correspondingly, studies have found that in male homosocial groups women are often spoken about in highly degrading ways (Flood, 2008) and treated as sexual objects (Bird, 1996; Curry, 1991), and that as part of male bonding sexist attitudes and rape culture may be promoted (Curry, 1991). These studies indicate that male homosocial groups have an important role in men's heterosexual experiences and activities, and may contribute to sexually aggressive behaviour.

A critical element of the influence of male peers is that they often serve as part of the "gender police" (Kimmel, 1994, p. 133), constantly evaluating whether or not individual males live up to the masculine ideal and ensuring that they refrain from any behaviour that could be considered feminine or homosexual (Bird, 1996; Curry, 1991; Kimmel, 1993, 1994; Pascoe, 2005). In such a way, it is argued that homophobia plays an important role in assuring men conform to the prescribed masculine behaviour (Curry, 1991; Franklin, 2004; Herek, 1987, 1995; Kimmel, 1994; Lehne, 1995). Homophobic insults (often in the form of jokes) are argued to generally have less to do with sexuality and more to do with the perceived femininity of a behaviour or person (with 'homosexual' being a symbol for that which is not 'manly'), and are therefore often used against heterosexual males (Lehne, 1995; Pascoe, 2005). Since having sex with women is a means of allaying the threat of being labelled homosexual, in a climate of homophobia pressure upon males to participate in sexual activities with women is intensified. Thus Kimmel (1994) posits that the fear of being labelled a homosexual, "keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity, including sexual predation with women" (p. 133).

A more explicit link between the performance of masculinity in male homosocial groups and rape can be seen in the practice of group (or 'gang') rape, sometimes seen as an acceptable means of male bonding (e.g. see Moolman, 2004; Jewkes et al., 2006; Sanday, 1990). Franklin (2004) argues that group rape is a particularly powerful way of demonstrating one's (hetero)sexual virility, as a male can provide direct evidence of sexual activity for his

peers, with the victim acting as “nothing more than a dramatic prop” (p. 29) through which males can “ritualistically enact an exaggerated version of the gender-role norms expected of men in hypermasculine social environments” (p. 26). Group rapes are likely to use greater levels of violence (including weapons) than single perpetrator rapes (Vetten & Haffejee, 2005) and also demonstrate more degradation of the victim (Franklin, 2004), indicating the significance of other males’ presence. Moolman (2004) found in her research on gangs in the Cape Flats in the Western Cape that gang rape is viewed as “a form of fun and adventure” (p. 116) through which the control of women’s bodies serves as “a measuring tool for successful masculinity” (p. 117). Alternatively, in the context of American fraternity houses, Sanday (1990) found that a ‘gang bang’ with a semi-conscious or unconscious intoxicated woman was largely regarded as normal, acceptable sexual behaviour. Demonstrating the prevalence of group rape in South Africa, in one rural area 13.9% (n = 1370) of young men reported being involved in ‘streamlining’ – which is “essentially a rape by two or more perpetrators” (Jewkes et al., 2006, p. 2951) – and 8.9% (n = 1680) of a random sample of urban and rural men across socioeconomic groups reported having raped a woman with one or more other men (Jewkes et al., 2011). Hood (1995) summarises the views of several researchers in the field as being that: “In a society that equates masculinity with dominance and sex with violence, gang rape becomes one way for adolescents to prove their masculinity both to themselves and to each other” (p. 308).

The research relating to rape as a performance of masculinity reflects of the notion of gender as a performance, and shows how the meaning with which rape is imbued can enable it to be seen as a means of demonstrating one’s masculinity, to oneself and to various audiences. In the following section the focus is alternatively on the notion of entitlement as a mediating variable between rape and masculinity.

***Entitlement as a mediator between conformity to masculinity ideology and rape.***

Gilbert (1992 as cited in Truman et al., 1996) describes some men’s sexual entitlement as encouraged by the fact that “our culture allows men to make their sexual needs explicit because they appear as rights or entitlement divorced from emotional neediness” (p. 560). Accordingly, entitlement is seen as being a part of masculine ideology, with Stoltenburg (1989 as quoted by Hill & Fischer, 2001) stating that, as a man, “being superior by social definition, one can want whatever one wants and one can expect to get it” (p. 17/ p. 40). Truman and colleagues (1996) concluded that when men feel disconnection from emotion (often encouraged in masculinity ideology, e.g. see Brannon, 1976; Luyt, 2003; Mahalik et al., 2003; O’Neill, 1981) in conjunction with entitlement, there may be an increased

likelihood that they find it acceptable to use sexually aggressive tactics to achieve gratification.

In a similar way, Hill and Fischer (2001) argue that masculine entitlement is the mediator between masculinity variables and rape proclivity. Relating to the South African context, Jewkes and colleagues (2005) noted that entitlement is connected to child rape particularly due to men's sense of entitlement to control girl children in patriarchal society, and Jewkes and colleagues (2011) found that some of men's most common motivations for rape "stemmed from ideas of sexual entitlement" (p. 9). Baaz and Stern (2009) also found in their study of Congolese soldiers that although women were seen as having the right to say 'no', the male soldiers' right to have sex was seen as superseding this right. In such a way, entitlement is argued to be an important factor regarding masculinity and rape, both in that it may make up an element of masculinity ideology that encourages rape and can alternatively be seen as a mediating variable in the relationship.

**Critique of the current research on masculinity and rape.** Although the research on masculinity and rape offers insight into the nature of their connection, it is not without its issues and limitations. Criticisms have been made relating both to rape-perception research in general as well as to masculinity research.

With regards to rape-perception research, Anderson and Doherty (2008) articulated several important criticisms of positivist work in this area. One of their primary criticisms of such studies is how the format, wording and emphases of vignettes and questionnaires can often be seen as reproducing victim-blaming arguments and reflecting to participants "a pattern of reasoning about rape that is informed by patriarchal values" (ibid, p. 49). Furthermore, they argue that the assumption made in such research about the neutrality of vignettes is incorrect, as "there is no such thing as a 'neutral' description; all description *describes*, even one that calls itself 'neutral'" (ibid, p. 61). Moreover, in addition to limiting responses to those pre-selected by the researcher, the use of questionnaires renders opaque many of the participants' perceptions of and interactions with different elements of such vignettes. The lack of opportunity to actively engage with vignettes (in conjunction with the victim-blaming framework such studies often reproduce) may also leave participants feeling disempowered, "with no space to challenge or transform the standard victim-blaming views that they are effectively invited to reproduce" (p. 55). Such research is therefore argued to be severely limited in its ability to account for explanations of rape, in addition to being criticized for its lack of reflexivity about potential negative effects on participants.

These researchers further argue that within rape-perception research in psychology, “the focus is on individuals and the internal sphere at the expense of examining the operation of dynamic social and cultural processes, social structural inequalities (oppression, power differentials) and material circumstances” (p. 42). These criticisms of such positivist work demonstrate the necessity of approaching the current body of rape-perception research with caution, as well as highlight the importance of undertaking discursive work in this area.

Correspondingly, a potential limitation of the masculinity research is the focus of many of the studies on *individuals* and masculine traits *within* these individuals. As previously discussed, psychology is traditionally rooted within essentialist notions of gendered identity (Cosgrove, 2003), and from such a perspective looking at masculinity as a characteristic of men reinforces that which from a social constructionist perspective is a false gender binary. Pleck, Sonenstein and Ku (1993) argue that in order to avoid this, quantitative research on masculinity should measure masculinity *ideology* (i.e. men’s beliefs or internalizations of masculinity construction in his culture) as opposed to measuring masculinity as traits. Such research is useful in that it can shed light on how internalisation of certain beliefs related to masculinity ideology may relate to other correlates (e.g. behaviour), whilst still acknowledging the socially constructed nature of masculinity (ibid). However, quantitative research on masculinity is nonetheless constrained by the fact that elements of masculinity are pre-constructed, as contestations by participants and the complex meanings of these elements cannot be examined. Investigating the connection between rape and masculinity from such a perspective therefore does not allow for examining the complexity of how different elements of masculinity ideology are drawn upon in order to understand, explain, or justify male sexual aggression. Furthermore, the extent of rape in this country points to the fact that it is a societal problem, and it is thus essential in dealing with this issue that we move beyond the focus on the individual.

Additional concerns relating to masculinity research include the limited demographic profile used in many studies and the validity of the masculinity scales (Good, Borst, & Wallace, 1994). Most of the correlational and laboratory studies discussed relating specifically to masculinity and rape were from the USA and used white, male, college students as participants, thus limiting the generalizability of findings. Recently, however, the growing international body of qualitative research on masculinity as well the utilisation of masculinity measures within other contexts (e.g. Jewkes et al., 2011; Luyt & Foster, 2001) has shed more light on masculinity constructions in other cultures and demographics.

Hearn and Collinson (1994) remark that due to the diversity of masculinity in different contexts and cultures, “traditions of supposedly universalizable masculinity-femininity scales and continua (Bem, 1977) seem [...] somewhat ridiculous” (p. 107). This argument is supported by research which found no significant differences between Japanese men and women’s scores in Bem’s (1977) scale (Sugihara & Katsurada, 1999). This relates to the social construction of gendered categories, and indicates the importance of considering the cultural and contextual specificity of the scales created, the limitations of their usages, and the importance of using contextually appropriate measures (e.g. see Luyt, 2005).

Despite the limitations of different types of research on masculinity as well as rape, the research base seems to demonstrate that masculinity ideology and rape are related on multiple levels and through several different pathways. However, it has been argued that the normalisation of coercive heterosexual practices which are *not* labelled as rape can be seen as contributing to what Gavey (2005) refers to as the ‘cultural scaffolding of rape’. For this reason, I now turn to the literature relating to the construction of masculinity in the context of accepted heterosexual practices.

### **The Masculine Construct in ‘Normal’ Heterosex and its Relation to Rape**

Gqola (2007) notes of the current situation in South Africa that, “those who pretend to be stunned by the statistics are lazily not making the connections between the various ways in which what is ‘normal’ heterosexual ‘play’ contain codes that inscribe feminine passivity and masculine aggression” (p. 117). Similarly, Burt (1980) argued that rape is simply “the logical and psychological extension of a dominant-submissive, competitive, sex role stereotyped culture” (p. 229), which can be seen as including ‘normal’ heterosexual practices.

Gavey (2005) contributes substantially to the notion of normal heterosex being related to rape in *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape*, in which she illuminates the vast ‘grey area’ between what we consider normal heterosex and what we call rape. Within this grey area, she reports some of the problematic coercive practices within heterosex, such as how women experience coerced and unwanted sex in many ways apart from being physically forced. These range from a woman having sex because of social pressure to be a ‘sexually liberated’ female; to accepting that her role of girlfriend/wife/mistress means being sexually available to her male partner even when she has no desire for sex herself; to ‘consenting’ to sex out of fear that if she does not she will be raped anyway (ibid). Walker (1997) also found that many women consent to sex for reasons other than desire, including, “the need to please one’s boyfriend/date, the perceived ‘unstoppability’ of male sexual arousal, and the power of

continued arguments to have intercourse” (p. 160). Factors such as these within heterosex can be seen as the ‘cultural scaffolding of rape’ (Gavey, 2005). Therefore for the current topic it is necessary to address how masculinity in ‘normal’ heterosex might contribute to sexual aggression – particularly considering that even in the most coercive of situations both men and women are often likely to label it ‘just sex’.

Although the limitations and issues with such studies have been discussed, questionnaire data from rape-perception studies support the existence of this ‘grey area’ in the context of non-stranger rape. Men report a greater likelihood to commit acquaintance-rape than stranger rape (e.g. Viki et al., 2006); acquaintance or ‘date’ rape is often regarded as less serious than stranger rape (e.g. Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, & Vyse, 1993; Truman, Tokar, & Fischer, 1996); people attributed less psychological problems to men who rape acquaintances or steady partners than who raped strangers (Bridges, 1991); and as the relationship between the victim and offender becomes closer, people are less likely to label a sexual assault as ‘rape’ (Bennice & Resick, 2003). Therefore, despite findings that show that rape victims across these different types of rape do not differ in their psychological symptoms (Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988), this research indicates that people generally regard rape within ‘normal’ heterosexual relations as more normal/acceptable than someone raping/being raped by a stranger, illustrating that within the frame of heterosex problematic practices may be normalised or rendered invisible.

A demonstration of this grey area in the South African context is that contrary to legal definitions a distinction is often made between ‘forcing’ a person to have sex and ‘rape’ (Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah, & Jordaan, 2001). For example, what is elsewhere termed ‘gang rape’ is instead referred to as ‘streamlining’ (if the victims know the perpetrators) (Jewkes et al., 2006) or ‘jackrolling’ (gang rape in public) (Mokwena, 1991 as cited in Bruce, 2007). Furthermore, in a national study of South African school students (aged 10 to 19,  $n = 269\,705$ ) 58.1% of respondents agreed with the statement that ‘Sexual violence does not include forcing sex with someone known’ (Andersson et al., 2004). In the case of *ukuthwala* (bride capture – occurring in some areas of the former Transkei), even if a woman is held down by several men in order for her new husband to ‘have sex’ with her, the elders “did not equate this with rape” (Wood, 2005, p. 313). Similarly, Wojcicki (2002) found in certain communities in South Africa that “local understandings of rape do not include nonconsensual sex between partners in relationships or between married partners” (p. 277). From a women’s rights’ perspective, this distinction is problematic, since “[r]eframing rape as ‘sex’ serves to

minimise the violence and severity of a rape experience and also normalises the alleged perpetrator's behaviour" (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 126).

This is often the case in romantic heterosexual relationships, which are the sites of many problematically coercive sexual practices. Brownmiller (1975) argues that although rape is always an exercise of power, it is often not simply a matter of physical power, but can occur "within an emotional setting or within a dependent relationship that provides a hierarchical, authoritarian structure of its own that weakens a victim's resistance, distorts her perspective and confounds her will" (p. 256). In South Africa, multiple studies have found sexual violence and coercion within relationships to be very common. Boonzaier (2008) found that wives were expected to be sexually available to their husbands, and likewise Niehaus (2005) found that wives were not seen as having the right to refuse sex. Other studies have found that young men view coercive sexual behaviour in relationships as normal and acceptable (Walker, 2005), and many women view male sexual violence and female powerlessness as 'normal' in romantic relationships (Varga & Makubalo, 1996). In line with these findings, Harris, Lea and Foster (1995) identified a discourse that posits that sexual aggression carried out by men is "normal" (p. 180). Wood (2005) also found that the young men studied claimed that women showed their consent to group 'sex' "through silence or failure to resist", or allowed it to happen "because they wanted to 'please' their boyfriends by having sex with his friends" (p. 311). What is rape and what is 'just sex' therefore can become particularly blurry in a context (such as South Africa) where male sexual aggression in relationships is considered 'normal'.

How masculinity (and male sexuality in particular) is constructed is an important element of problematic discourses surrounding heterosex. Studies in South Africa (e.g. Campbell, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2005; Miles, 1992; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wojcicki, 2002; Wood & Jewkes, 2001) and elsewhere (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Farvid & Braun, 2006; Hird & Jackson, 2001), have demonstrated a widespread acceptance of what Hollway (1989) has termed the 'Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive'. This is the most common description of male sexuality, the principle notion of which is that "men are driven by the biological necessity to seek out (heterosexual) sex" (ibid., p. 54). For example, in Campbell's (2001) study on South African mine workers, men's inability to control their sexual drives was used to explain their risky sexual behaviour, and celibacy was seen as having many possible negative effects on men – mentally, physically, as well as behaviourally (p. 283). Moreover, in several studies this uncontrollable sexual drive has been argued to lead to rape (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Wojcicki,



2002), with adolescents in Hird and Jackson's (2001) study describing rape as the "'natural' outcome of [a male's] overpowering sexual need" (p. 36).

Relating to the earlier discussion on homophobia in male homosocial groups, in most dominant constructions male sexuality is *heterosexual* (Hollway, 1989). This is often referred to as the 'heterosexual imperative', and Morrell and Swart (2005) argue that "in Africa, compulsory heterosexuality is a key feature of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 107). Even within South African prisons, where male-on-male rape occurs, the victim is often labelled as a woman (or *wyfie*), indicating the importance for certain men of maintaining a heterosexual identity even within the context of homosexual relations (Gear, 2007). In Wight's (1994) study of adolescent males, heterosexuality and demonstrations of heterosexual sexual behaviour were essential parts of the masculine construct. Furthermore, Renold (2007) found that from a young age boys may use heterosexual relationships as performances of masculinity, and that "most boys resulted to defining their heterosexuality through sex talk, sexual fantasy, misogyny, (hetero)sexual harassment, antigay behaviours, and policing and shaming Other nonhegemonic masculinities" (p. 293). Similarly, Curry (1991) found that within the fraternal bonding of a university sports team, demonstrating one's success with having intercourse with women was an important part of male identity, as well as speaking about women in sexist and objectifying ways. Possibly indicating the influence of the 'heterosexual imperative', Kanin (1967) found that males' perception of peer pressure to "seek sexual activity" was positively correlated with sexual aggression. In the South African context, amongst Niehaus's (2005) participants, "[a] foremost challenge for young men was to demonstrate their heterosexuality" (p. 72), and in Jewkes and colleagues' (2011) study rape was positively correlated with behaviours indicative of "a need to display exaggerated heterosexual performance" (p. 9). These findings demonstrate that the practice and display of heterosexuality is often an essential component of hegemonic masculinity, and that misogyny and sexual aggression may be supplementary methods of maintaining one's heterosexual masculine identity.

Another key element to address when looking at masculinity within heterosex is the construction of femininity, as this works to compliment and contrast the construction of masculinity in various ways. Whereas male sexuality is constructed as aggressive and as a biological need, female sexuality is alternatively often constructed as passive and predominantly for men's sexual needs. This discourse of female sexual passivity is one that has been demonstrated often in the literature concerning heterosex both locally and internationally (e.g. Crawford, Kippax, & Waldby, 1994; Gavey, 1992; Gavey, 2005; Gqola,

2007; Holland, Ramazanoglu & Thomson, 1996; Hird & Jackson, 2001; Jackson & Cram, 2003; Miles, 1992; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Wight, 1994; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). One of the seminal texts on how women are positioned in heterosex is Fine's (1988) work exploring sexual education in schools, where she found that the notion of girls/women having sexual desire was completely absent ('the missing discourse of desire') – instead, girls/women were positioned as the subjects (or victims) of male sexuality, with their only agency being their ability to say 'yes' or 'no' to male sexual advances. Similarly, Jackson and Cram (2003) found that adolescent girls see female sexuality as subordinate to male sexuality. Farvid and Braun (2006) found that even in certain women's magazines that at face value seem to support female sexual agency and desire ultimately male sexuality is prioritized; heterosex is still seen as predominantly about *male* sexual needs, with women's sexuality chiefly constructed as a tool they use in order to obtain romantic relationships with men. This construction of female sexuality is problematic in several ways: In conjunction with the hegemonic essentialist view of gender, it positions women who actively demonstrate sexual desire and/or have sex with women as somehow deviant (as is demonstrated in the derogatory labels given to girls/women who have multiple sexual partners and the sometimes violent negative responses to lesbians); it adds to the 'grey area', as women's sexual desire is not seen as a necessary requirement in order for heterosex to occur; and its depiction of women's sexuality as primarily for men's usage contributes to the notion of male sexual entitlement to female bodies.

Another factor to consider is pornography and its role in shaping discourse surrounding heterosex as well as heterosexual practice, both for its importance in representing male and female sexuality in dangerous ways and for its problematic representations of 'consensual' sex. Maitse (1998) argues that in South Africa, in the context of men's difficulty with changing gender relations, pornography is fuelling rape and sexual violence against women. Accordingly, researchers have found that mainstream heterosexual pornography has become increasingly violent, with the majority of the targets of such violence being female and the perpetrators male (Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer, Sun & Liberman, 2010). In such a way, Dines (2010) argues that "porn trains men to become desensitized to women's pain" (p. 74), transmitting the message that when it comes to sex women enjoy being abused and/or accept their subordination and degradation. Although the relationship between pornography and sexual violence is a complex one, which should not be oversimplified, the research suggests that pornography is currently an important medium through which discourses surrounding sexuality are perpetuated, and it has been shown to have undesirable effects on male viewers'

attitudes and behaviours regarding rape and women (e.g. Hald, Malamuth & Yuen, 2009; Linz, Donnerstein & Penrod, 1988; Malamuth & Check, 1985; Peter & Valkenburg, 2009; Mulac, Jansma & Linz, 2002). For example, early experimental research found that exposure to aggressive pornography increased men's aggression towards women in the laboratory context (Donnerstein, 1980a, 1980b, 1983, 1984, Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1982 as cited in Donnerstein & Linz, 1987), and a recent meta-analysis of nine non-experimental studies found a significant positive relationship between pornography usage and attitudes supporting violence against women (Hald, Malamuth & Yuen, 2009). Researchers have further argued that pornography serves to reproduce discourses about male sexuality being divorced from emotion and intimacy (in line with common constructions of masculinity), as well as discourses about women being sexually available to all men, which in turn may impact the sexual experiences and behaviours of pornography consumers (Brod, 1995; Dines, 2010).

Although the interpretations of such findings have been contested regarding the ecological validity of laboratory research and the inability of correlational research to demonstrate a causal relationship between pornography exposure and sexual violence perpetration, (e.g. see Bauserman, 1996), Dines (2010) posits that the question "Does porn cause rape?" should be replaced with "questions that ask how porn images shape our reality and our culture" (p. 85). She further argues that: "How porn is implicated in rape is complex and multilayered. Clearly, not all men who use porn rape, but what porn does is create what some feminists call a 'rape culture' by normalizing, legitimizing, and condoning violence against women" (ibid., p. 96).

The reach and influence of pornography in contemporary times makes its effects an important concern. The scope of the pornography industry is demonstrated by the fact that it is worth nearly \$100 billion (Klein, 2011), and it has been found that with the ease of access to the internet boys are viewing pornography at increasingly young ages (Dines, 2010; Flood, 2009). Therefore, in contemporary society, it can be argued that pornography plays an important role in encouraging sexual aggression and creating and/or maintaining problematic discourses which contribute to the 'grey area' between rape and consensual heterosexual.

**Implications of this literature for the current study.** The research clearly demonstrates the importance of acknowledging discourse surrounding 'normal' heterosexual practices, particularly within heterosexual relationships, when considering the issue of masculinity and rape. Research exploring discourses surrounding male and female sexuality; the male sexual role in heterosexual sexual encounters and relationships; the heterosexual imperative present in the hegemonic masculinity of many contexts; as well the images of

heterosex represented in mainstream heterosexual pornography, highlights the necessity of taking into account how masculinity is constructed in the context of 'normal' heterosex and how it might influence the acceptability or normalisation of both rape and/or sexually coercive practices. Both this research and the research connecting masculinity and sexual aggression clearly demonstrate that the ways in which masculinity and male sexuality are constructed can have a significant influence on men's sexual behaviour. This is therefore an important relationship to explore in a context where the perpetration of sexual violence is so great, which leads me to the aims of the current study.

University of Cape Town

## AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to explore discourses of masculinity in the context of male university students' talk on rape in South Africa. Firstly, I wanted to explore what male students' talk on why certain men rape in South Africa could reveal about how masculinity is constructed in relation to rape in this context. Secondly, I wanted to investigate what male students' discourses around masculinity and rape could tell us about the masculine construct in heterosex in general. Finally, I wanted to explore how masculinity discourses might affect the subjectivity of perpetrators of rape in South Africa, as well as of how we regard rape and rapists in this country. The first set of research questions below relates to masculinity and rape, whereas the second set relates more specifically to masculinity and rape in the context of heterosexual relationships:

*1.1 How do students construct masculinity in talk on rape in South Africa?*

*1.2 What are some of the implications of these constructions (e.g. for power relations and subjectivity)?*

*1.3 How might the discourses surrounding masculinity in South Africa affect how we view perpetrators of rape and sexual aggression in different contexts in South Africa?*

*2.1 What can constructions of masculinity in talk on different rape scenarios tell us about the construction of masculinity in heterosex?*

*2.2 How is male sexuality constructed in relation to female sexuality in the context of rape?*

By using these questions to design the study and analyse the data gathered, I hoped to shed more light on the relationship between masculinity and rape in South Africa, as the literature indicates that this is an important construct to examine in such a context. In order to do so I needed to utilise an appropriate design, methodology and theoretical framework, to which I will now turn.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, DESIGN, AND METHODOLOGY**

In this section I will discuss why feminist post-structuralism is an appropriate theoretical framework for dealing with the relationship between masculinity and rape in South Africa. I will also describe how and why focus group methodology and discourse analysis were used for this study. Lastly, I will cover the issue of reflexivity as well as ethical considerations.

### **Using Feminist Post-structuralism in Addressing Masculinity and Rape**

Given the aims of the study, feminist post-structuralism is an appropriate theoretical framework. Formally articulated by Weedon (1987), this framework utilises certain post-structuralist concepts for feminist research and aims, and has been argued to be “of great potential value to feminist psychologists” (Gavey, 1989, p. 459). Feminist research is “concerned with interrogating and understanding the political, economic, and social inequities between women and men” (Hare-Mustin, 2004, p. 16), often with emancipatory goals. Post-structuralism alternatively refers to ideas expounded by a number of different theorists, grouped under one label because of their related assumptions regarding language, meaning and subjectivity (Weedon, 1987). Within the feminist post-structuralist paradigm, the importance of language is stressed. It is argued that language not only imbues meaning on what are inherently meaningless experiences but is also fundamental to our individual subjectivities, i.e. how we experience ourselves and our relation to the world. Scientific knowledge from this perspective is not seen as leading us towards an ‘absolute truth’ about human nature and the world, but rather all knowledge is seen as being “socially produced and inherently unstable” (Gavey, 1989, p. 459). Although espousing that knowledge does not represent ‘absolute truth’, post-structuralism does not ignore the very real effects of different types of knowledge on both the experiences and material realities of individuals’ lives.

Expressions of such beliefs or understandings of the world can be labelled as ‘discourses’. Hollway (1983 as quoted by Gavey, 1989) describes discourse as an interconnected “system of statements which cohere around common meanings and values [that] are a product of social factors, of powers and practices, rather than an individual’s set of ideas” (p. 464). Foucault (1981 as cited in Weedon, 1987) stressed the importance of the historical specificity of discourse. Therefore discourses can be seen as types of historically specific knowledge, perpetuated through language. An important element of discourse is that its effects are not simply limited to language, but it also impacts the lives and experiences of those “subjected” to it (Weedon, 1987, p. 34). Foucault inextricably links the concept of

discourse to power, arguing that power is “exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects” (as cited in Weedon, 1987, p. 113). The amount of influence a discourse has depends largely on the extent to which it is accepted in society, and discourses that are commonly accepted as truth in a society are referred to as ‘dominant’ or ‘hegemonic’ discourses. The essentialist view of gender, discussed earlier, can be regarded as the dominant or hegemonic discourse on gender at present, and one of the ways in which this discourse is related to power is through eliciting self-surveillance in its subjects regarding appropriately gendered behaviour (Gavey, 1992).

Discourses have an important impact on individual subjectivity, and thus on individual behaviour. Subjectivity, as defined by Weedon (1987), refers to “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). Weedon posits that subjectivity is constructed rather than innate, and is socially produced through discourse. Therefore, through discourse individuals come to make sense of themselves and their relation to the world. The historical specificity of discourse and its changing nature means that different forms of subjectivity “change with shifts in the wide range of discursive fields which constitute them” (Weedon, 1987, p. 33). Subjectivity is thus viewed as fluid and malleable, affected by the changing nature of discourse as well as where individuals identify themselves within each discourse (i.e. what subject positions they take up).

Since within the dominant discourse of gender ‘male’ and ‘female’ are constructed as exhaustive of all people, discourses surrounding gender influence most (if not all) people in the world today. Considering masculinity discourses prescribe ways of being for men in a given context, they have the power to affect not only how we view men, but also men’s individual subjectivities. Certain discourses surrounding masculinity can be seen as being part of what Gavey (2005) refers to as ‘the cultural scaffolding of rape’. Discourses surrounding masculinity are thus important to address when investigating the potential influences of sexual aggression and rape in South Africa. Feminist post-structuralism is thus an appropriate framework from which to explore the issue of masculinity and rape, considering that it allows for the investigation of discourses that may serve to create an environment in which male sexual aggression is considered normal and/or acceptable behaviour.

## Design and Methodology

**Qualitative research and discourse analysis.** Given that the study aims to examine discourse, it is qualitative in design. Qualitative research stems from the argument that quantitative research in psychology ignores “the quintessential feature of being human, that is, the meaningful nature of our activity” (Durrheim, 1997, p. 175). Historically, qualitative methods in psychology have been greatly influenced by feminist theory (Parker, 2005), with much psychological research from within the traditional positivist (‘scientific’) paradigm being critiqued as forming part of a “male science” (Willig, 2001, p. 6) that propagates sexist knowledge claims depicted as objective truth. In the qualitative paradigm, the positivist notion of ‘value-free’ objective research is rejected, as is the practice of taking the “male as norm” (Willig, 2001, p. 6), and the subjectivity and identity of the researcher are acknowledged as having important influences on research produced.

Qualitative research represents part of the ‘turn to language’ occurring in psychology around the early 1970s (Parker, 2005), and one of the approaches closely associated with this shift is discourse analysis, which was used in the current study. This is an appropriate method through which to examine masculinity ideology and rape as it is both congruent with feminist post-structuralism and useful for examining how unequal power relations are discursively maintained and legitimated (Gavey, 1989). In particular Parker’s (2002) criteria for doing discourse analysis were drawn on. These criteria, based on Foucault’s concept of discourse, discussed above, include recognising that a discourse is “historically located” (p. 153), that it “contains subjects” (p. 152), that it is “a coherent system of meanings” (p. 145), and that it “reflects on its own way of speaking” (p. 148). Furthermore, Parker’s auxiliary criteria, of particular importance for the issues in the current study, include that discourses “reproduce power relations” (p. 155) and “have ideological effects” (p. 156). Weedon’s (1987) articulation of feminist post-structuralism was also drawn on in relation to how discourses surrounding masculinity and rape might affect individual subjectivity and power relations, and other influences include Edley’s (2001) chapter on analysing masculinity, Willig’s (2001) steps for discourse analysis, as well as a number of empirical articles (such as those covered in the literature review) which used discourse analysis.

The use of quantitative research in rape-perception studies has been highly criticised (Anderson & Doherty, 2008) and quantitative studies on masculinity, although valuable, are limited in that masculinity is necessarily treated as a static entity. A qualitative method is thus appropriate for the current study, as it allows for investigation of the fluid, multi-faceted



nature of masculinity. Additionally, discourse analysis allows for the exploration of constructions of masculinity and their possible ideological effects.

**Method.** Discourses depend on shared understandings of phenomena for their existence. Therefore, focus groups, which allow for the co-construction of meaning amongst participants (Wilkinson, 1998), were an appropriate data collection method for this study. Focus groups have been argued to be one of the preferred methods of data collection in both feminist research and for research looking at discourse (Wilkinson, 1998; Montell, 1999). They create a more natural setting for discourse to be examined than other research methods (Wilkinson, 1999); participants have a greater role in producing data, with relatively less influence from the researcher (Wilkinson, 1998), and the nature of focus groups as interactive distinguishes the data produced from alternative qualitative methods (Frith, 2000). Furthermore, the use of focus groups “ensures that priority is given to the respondents’ hierarchy of importance, *their* language and concepts, *their* frameworks for understanding the world” (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 108, original emphasis). Montell (1999) thus argues that focus groups are “ideal for exploring public discourse and taken-for-granted cultural assumptions” (p. 64). Research has also shown that participants may feel more comfortable amongst a group in which they have something in common and feel encouraged by others’ disclosures (Frith, 2000). This may potentially lead to greater participation and disclosure than one-on-one interviews (ibid).

**Participants.** Study participants were male students at the University of Cape Town, aged 18 to 25 years (mean = 21.4). Individual focus groups consisted of between four and six male students, with 30 participants in total. Participants were recruited through posters advertising the study on campus and in university residences and received R50 compensation for their time. This recruitment strategy may have resulted in some participants volunteering because they are interested in the topic of rape in South Africa and others participating because of the monetary compensation. Self-identified racial demographics of the participants were 5 ‘African’, 13 ‘Black’, 7 ‘Black African’, 4 ‘Coloured’ and 1 ‘White’ participant<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> These labels reflect the participants own descriptions, as no pre-selected options were given.

This sample was chosen not only for its ease of access, but also for the characteristics of these participants as high-school educated, university students. There is a common perception that gender issues are only a problem amongst the uneducated, yet there have been several studies which demonstrate that educated university students often utilise problematic discourses relating to masculinity (e.g. Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Harris, Lea, & Foster, 1995; Kaminer & Dixon, 1995; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Cooper & Foster, 2008; Peace, 2003). These demonstrate that university students are an important group to study in this area.

Although constructions of masculinity and femininity may predominantly serve male interests, problematic discourses surrounding gender are utilised by both men and women. Peace (2003) has argued that by using only males in research on masculinity it is implied that “only men construct masculinities, and that only men maintain their position of power” (p. 159). However, whilst acknowledging that women also contribute to the construction of masculinity, the decision was made to use only males in this study. This was based largely on the fact that the data from the pilot study (see Everitt-Penhale, 2010) demonstrated that issues of masculinity in talk on rape were far more salient amongst male students as opposed to female students (for obvious reasons). Therefore, only male students were used in this study in order to maximise the data’s relevance to the given topic.

**Procedure.** The focus groups each ran for approximately 90 minutes, with 20 minutes set aside before and ten minutes after for administrative issues. Participants were given consent forms (Appendix A), including consent to record the focus groups (Appendix B), which were gone through at the start of each focus group session. They were also provided with the contact details of the UCT Student Wellness Centre (Appendix C) in case they were distressed by the discussion and wanted to utilise the university’s counselling services. The issue of confidentiality was then discussed. Participants were assured of their anonymity and that their identities would not be revealed in any write-up of the results of the study. They were also asked to record their age, ‘race’ and year of study for demographic purposes (Appendix D).

Once the administrative issues were covered and participants had introduced themselves, I briefly gave some statistics on rape in South Africa, emphasising that it is a serious problem in this country. Thereafter, participants were asked to discuss a definition of

rape that would be used for the purposes of the discussion. In all but one of the groups, participants were quickly able to come to an agreement about how rape would be defined within the discussion<sup>13</sup>. Thereafter, in order to maximise the participants' shaping of the data, they were asked a single, open-ended question as to why they thought certain men were raping women and girls in South Africa, and the discussions continued from that point.

After the allocated time (60 minutes) had passed, participants were asked if they had anything further to say or to ask about the research. They were reminded that they could contact me or my supervisor at any stage should they have any issues or questions concerning the research or if they did not want their contributions to be used. After responding to any questions, participants were thanked for their time and contribution and were provided with compensation for their participation in the research.

### **Reflexivity**

Within qualitative research, the researcher herself is considered an important part of the research, with her own values and beliefs seen as playing a role in both the type of research that is done as well as the results found (Wilkinson, 1988). Interrogation of this role is referred to as 'personal reflexivity', which Willig (2001) describes as involving "reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research" (p. 10). Considerations of this kind relate to the position of the researcher; that is, "the structurally-constituted research subjectivity that has enabled some things to happen in the research and perhaps closed down other things" (Parker, 2005, p. 30). Although within the positive paradigm the values and identity of the researcher are considered "sources of bias and obstacles to determining 'the facts'" (Wilkinson, 1988, p. 494), within qualitative research the unavoidability of the researcher's personal subjectivity being reflected in her research is

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<sup>13</sup> For Group 3, alternatively, I eventually ended the lengthy discussion on the definition by acknowledging the disagreement and asking participants to instead refer specifically to details when referring to rape in order that their particular usage was made clear.

acknowledged and personal values are instead seen “both as central to and as a resource which informs one’s research” (ibid, p. 494).

For the current study, it is therefore acknowledged that the choice of focus (i.e. masculinity), the method of analysis used and my personal identity have all shaped the data in specific ways. The focus on masculinity meant that certain elements of the data not pertinent to this concept were not explored in-depth, and the focus on negative aspects of masculinity constructions is also clearly influenced by the nature of the topic. Similarly, the use of discourse analysis with its particular focus on power and ideology (Parker, 2002) means that elements of the data not viewed as relevant to these issues were less emphasised. The data was also clearly shaped by my identity as a woman and by the feminist approach taken in addressing the issue of rape as a serious and gendered social problem. These factors contribute to why the constructions focused on are primarily those which can be viewed as ideologically problematic or as potentially contributing to rape perpetration.

Similarly, it is important in qualitative research to acknowledge the identities of both the researcher and the participants, and the ways in which those identities may have served to influence the research process and the data collected. The similarities and differences between my identity (female, white<sup>14</sup>, researcher, senior student) and participants’ identities would have shaped the data in different ways. A male focus group co-ordinator would undoubtedly have enabled different points to arise, and the presence of a woman would have constrained the discussions in specific ways. The presence of other males in this instance may have in part mitigated some of this effect, since as males in a group they outnumbered me as a female researcher and often drew on their mutual experiences of maleness within the discussions. There are also certain possible benefits to my identity as a woman for what was said within the groups; elements of men’s experiences and the way in which they differ from women’s were at times explained in-depth to me, whereas in the case of a male researcher some such things may have been taken-for-granted to be mutually understood due to their

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<sup>14</sup> In the South African context my identity as ‘white’ would also have influenced perceptions of my socioeconomic status.

shared identities as men. Similarly, my racial identity differed from most of the participants, and therefore is likely to have resulted in similar constraints/benefits.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In terms of harm to the participants, the researcher/participant relationship also sets up a certain power dynamic in which participants are vulnerable to exploitation. However, Wilkinson (1998) argues that focus groups are advantageous in that they help diminish some of the issues of power in the traditional one-on-one interview setting, since their number gives participants more power. This is in accordance with feminist research in that it allows for “a more egalitarian and less exploitative dynamic than other methods” (Montell, 1999, p. 44).

The study did not require participants to discuss personal information or experiences (although some chose to), and in order to avoid potential harm the study poster (Appendix E) clearly indicated that the discussion would be on sexual violence in South Africa. The issue of rape has also been given media attention in South Africa and participants are likely to have been involved with discussions on it before. Therefore I did not foresee harm being caused to participants simply because the study deals with such a serious issue. Participants were also made aware of the possible risks in the consent forms (Appendix A), and reminded that they were free to leave the study at any time without penalty. As discussed, they were also given the details of the student wellness centre (Appendix C) in case they were in any way distressed by the discussion. Although the study did not require participants to discuss personal experiences, a potential risk of focus groups is that participants disclose more than they later feel comfortable with, and so this was also discussed in the consent form (Appendix A).

Apart from to each other and to me, all participants’ participation in the study was anonymous; no names or identifying details of participants were used in the write-up of this study or in any other circumstances, although participants were informed that the discussion data would be used in the write-up. Participants were also informed that the data would be secure and only accessible to me and my supervisor. Additionally, the limits to confidentiality were also discussed (i.e. that I had no control over what participants might talk about outside of the focus group discussions), although two out of six groups decided to sign the non-disclosure agreement provided (Appendix F).

Another potential ethical issue with talking to men about rape in a research setting is that the researcher’s silences on or lack of contention with participants’ comments may be

read as tacit support or condoning of their views, which is particularly problematic with regards to those views which support rape myths or condone men's perpetration of sexual violence (Sikweyiya, Jewkes & Morrell, 2007). Within a focus group this risk may be increased or decreased in comparison to a one-on-one interview setting, as the problem may be avoided (by virtue of the fact that other participants challenge such views) or alternatively compounded (if such views receive support from other participants). Within this study I did not challenge participants on their views and they also were not debriefed on such issues after the discussions, which may be regarded as problematic, particularly considering the nature of some of the views discussed. This factor unfortunately only came to light well after the data collection had been completed, but future research of this kind should take this issue into consideration.

I will now turn to the results of these discussion groups and my analysis of the discourses on masculinity present in these students' talk on rape in South Africa.

## ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis was used to analyse the data, focusing on constructions of masculinity and the implications of those constructions. I have divided the findings for this analysis into three sections, namely the ‘Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive’ (Hollway, 1989), ‘Heterosex’, and ‘Masculinity as Power’; however each of these sections is strongly linked to the others. The Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive section examines those accounts of rape which draw on this discourse; the section on heterosex explores the different representations of the experiences and meanings of males’ and females’ heterosexual activity; and in the final section I have looked at how power is constructed as a key element of masculinity in different ways within the data. It is important to note that the focus of this study is discourses, and thus the individual beliefs and characters of participants are not under examination. Problematizing discourses is therefore not meant to vilify or judge those reproducing such discourses, whose complex beliefs and identities are not explored in this dissertation.

### **Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive**

Discourses surrounding masculinity are essential in maintaining certain common rape myths, through which “rapists are often exonerated while it is the victim who is found culpable” (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 2). Within the current data, one of the dominant functions of discourses connecting masculinity to rape was to minimize the rapists’ responsibility and instead place responsibility onto the victims of rape, particularly through the use of the Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive. As discussed in the literature review, Hollway (1989) articulated the Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive (hereafter DMSD) as constructing the male sexual drive as the biological, uncontrollable need for men to have (heterosexual) sex. This has been found to be the dominant discourse on male sexuality in multiple studies in South Africa (e.g. Campbell, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2005; Miles, 1992; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wojcicki, 2002; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Given the ubiquity of this discourse, it is unsurprising that it played a prominent role in the participants’ discussions of rape in South Africa. The three most prominent constructions of rape which drew on this discourse were the idea of men having to

“resort” to rape if they did not have access to consensual sex<sup>15</sup>; of men being “provoked” into raping through women’s revealing clothing; and of women being culpable for being raped whilst drinking because they are providing men with the “opportunity” to rape them. The final discourse discussed in this section alternatively positioned males’ raping as being related to love. By utilising relevant extracts from the discussions, in this section I explore the ways in which these accounts of rape draw on the DMSD and how both men and women are positioned in relation to this discourse in the context of male students’ explaining rape in South Africa.

**Men resorting to rape: “To serve their desire, what they have to do is to rape”.**

One way in which the DMSD is represented in the text is through the idea that when men are unable to have consensual sexual intercourse they “resort” to rape. This is demonstrated in the following extracts:

***Extract 1***

Z: They’re going to break, any law, it doesn’t matter, if you... are sexually deprived

[M: Oh...], you will rape. (Group 1)

***Extract 2***

J: Or we can even, like, *chalk* it down to a direct... correlation where, the guy doesn’t know how to talk to the girl. And so rape is the only outlet. If... through socialisation he learns... how to... [M: Mm] connect...

DD: Emotionally...

J: And and spe- And have a normal conversation with her, a girl... [EE: ‘Cause-] and not rape.

DD: I’ve come across a couple of guys who’ll, they’ll come and talk to me, like, we’ll be just like me and him like, we’ll be *talking* about things and, we’ll be like, ‘hey, you know there was a guy who came to me the other day who’s really complaining that he, can’t talk to girls, you know?’ And this thing is frustrating, it builds - like it

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<sup>15</sup> Within this section “sex” refers to heterosexual intercourse.



builds up and... he finds rape as... the only... [J: Option left?] option left, you know it's like... (Group 5)

### ***Extract 3***

K: [...] there are thugs, there are people who are criminals, outside there, so sometimes you know that, they, are being feared, you see, so sometimes, as a girl you won't... be in love with such, people, so maybe they don't have the chance of... being in relationship so, to serve their desire, what they have to do is to rape, in order to help themselves you see [...]. (Group 3)

The rapist in these situations is constructed as a man who is driven to rape by his inability to have sex by consensual means. The man is not seen as making the *choice* to rape—rather, the circumstances lead him to “resort” to rape (Z, Group 1, extract not quoted), rape is his “only [...] option left” (DD, Group 5), or “what [he has] to do is to rape” (K, Group 3). Similar to Campbell’s (2001) findings on South African mine workers, the idea that a man can go without sex is not entertained; sex is assumed to be a requirement (without which the man “resort[s]” to raping someone). The power of this need is demonstrated by K’s comment that, “to serve their desire, what they have to do is to rape”. This construction of the male sexual drive as a need is consistent with Hollway’s (1989) articulation of the DMSD, and because this need for sex is seen as being largely out of the control of the men in which it resides, the culpability attributed to the rapist in these scenarios is diminished.

Reducing the culpability of the perpetrators of rape is one of the central ways in which the DMSD functions in this data. This enables blame to be placed upon the victims, such as the argument that women’s revealing clothing can lead men to rape, which I will now address.

**Women’s Clothing Account of Rape: “They’re wearing *less*, and *less* clothing [...], hence, we’re getting more and more rapists”.** Men’s lack of control of their sexual drive is also the underlying assumption beneath the idea that women’s clothing can cause men to rape. What I have labelled the ‘Women’s Clothing Account of Rape’ (hereafter WCAR) has been found in multiple studies in South Africa. For example, Wojcicki (2002) found in certain communities that a woman wearing a short skirt was “seen as a possible enticement for aggressive and violent male advances” (p. 275) and “believed to lead naturally to rape” (p. 278). Wood (2005) found that women wearing ‘provocative’ clothing was seen as

“‘disrespectful’ behaviour that might ‘invite’ rape” (p. 310). In line with these South African findings are findings from rape-perception research, in which participants assigned more blame to rape victims that are described as wearing revealing or provocative clothing (Kanekar & Kolsawalla, 1980; Whatley, 1996, 2005). An item of women’s clothing is included in Burt’s (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance scale (RMA), and a meta-analysis of RMA correlates found it to have a strong relationship with measures of sexual aggression, indicating that such beliefs are likely to play a role in sexual violence perpetration (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Accordingly, in South Africa, Jewkes and colleagues (2011) found that men who reported having raped more strongly supported rape myths than those who had not.

Inherent in the WCAR is the assumption that when men see a certain amount of a woman’s body they are aroused and thereafter cannot control their actions. For example:

***Extract 4a***

U: Um I also wanna... add that uh [...]<sup>16</sup>... some, women, we see on the street, have really, provoking clothes. I’m a Christian so... sometime- and *honestly*, as I say, men are *more* physical than women, so, what I see, I appreciate. But, woman is more like, uh... *emotional*. So, that’s why you see we have more... men raping women than women raping, uh... men. Not only because of the *strength*, that men have, but also because of the desire, too, actually... reproduce (quietly). So, I know it might sound silly but, me I think, the... It *may* help, it *might* help, also [AA: Mm], to reduce, also, the the... the *provoking* clothing and stuff.

CC: (Laughs loudly)

U: Yeah but it’s *true* because... you can see like yesterday I was [Laughter from group], I was-  
[Unclear comment from group member]

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<sup>16</sup> Due to space constraints and in order to be able to demonstrate *joint* constructions of meaning, I have by necessity had to remove segments of texts from the extracts utilised. In order to minimise the negative effects of this I have attempted to ensure the meaning of participants’ statements is not misrepresented as a result of such omissions.

U: Yeah, I'm a guy, so, when I see! So yesterday I was in the street in a taxi, and I saw, a girl, who has, just, like... *just*, at the level of [demonstrates length of skirt on himself]... and I, almost like (unclear), honestly I look and I'm like... 'wow, this is beautiful but this is bad'.

[Much loud laughter from group]

U: No! It was bad! (Shouts above laughter) What do you get... What do you get, from that when you look, *honestly*, all guys [CC: True, true]... you get the desire. You want that woman [AA: Ja], *not*, because you *love* her but *because* you desire, and you *confuse*, you *confuse* in your mind, you start thinking of... 'ah, I *really* want that woman'. But, you don't like her, you don't love her [P: Ja...], and you, you become *confused* in your mind [CC: Ja], you just, 'I want her' [Laughter], that's, that's, so I *think* it might be an issue, I can't say that, South African, has... bad clothing or stuff because, also in my country [Congo] it's become... worse and worse, and you can *take* many countries you will see that... the more we're going up the more clothes, are... I even think in myself if, we're gonna go back to the, naked strip or (laughs).

[Laughter from group]

U: But honestly... I think.... it might help [CC: Ja], it might help. Not, we don't ask to... like... wear long skirt or, no, just, something decent like [CC: Ja ja], you for example (referring to researcher) [Researcher and group laugh]. [CC: Ja ja I just, I just-] It's not for working, it's nice! It's...

CC: You know what if you... (trying to talk over laughter) if you actually say this in front of a feminist, they will *chow* you.

U: I *know*... that's why we're doing it (laughs).

CC: Because, the reason I say it is because, have you heard of uh, have you heard of the... the Cape Town *Slut* Walk? There was a... apparently there was a woman... there was a woman who... who got *raped*, and... correct me if I'm wrong, but... the *woman* who got raped –it wasn't in South Africa, but- she got raped and the police after said, 'you know, but what were you doing wearing a... short skirt', as if to say... you know, you're actually responsible [U: Exactly]. So the thing is, I I actually understand where you're coming from where it's like, look [U: It's in the mind] it's it's it's... when a woman wears a very... you know, short skirt.... and whatever it is, it is provoking, *but*... it's your... responsibility as a *man*, to control yourself, still, like...

U: But... [Group laughs loudly, including above speaker] I want to add something also. Even G-d, who made us, says, 'don't resist. Run away', because he knows... you cannot.

CC: Yes. I know (laughs).

U: So... you can't *control* yourself.

[Laughter from group]

[...]

AA: I, I... I *guess*... I kind of wanna... um, add something that would bring a lot of... kind of clarity, to what he's saying is that... And, that's something that we should *add* in... education, um... in community education settings is that, *men... are visual beings* [Some laughter from group members]. We... Our *vision's* controlling our *sexuality* [U: Exactly], and I don't think –I *try* to- I try to... to explain that to my girlfriend more than ten times she's like 'I don't get it'. (Group 6)

U and AA's construction of male sexuality in this extract draws on the epithet of 'men as visual beings' (AA), who are aroused by seeing women's bodies to such an extent that they cannot "resist" and must "run away" (U). This rests on the essentialist account of gender, and in this instance men are described as "physical" whereas women alternatively are described as more "emotional" (U), and unable to understand that men's "vision's controlling [their] sexuality" (AA). A biological, or perhaps evolutionary, discourse is drawn on by U when he mentions men's sexual desire as being related to his "desire to [...] reproduce". Within this extract not only is it argued that men cannot control their desire, but desire is constructed as being able to control men. The other group members laugh at U's comments, which is perhaps a reflection of their perception of the WCAR as 'politically incorrect' (it has received media attention recently) and thus controversial, or alternatively could simply be because talking about sexual desire and women's clothing appears "silly" (as put by U) relative to the preceding discussion. No one except CC explicitly disagrees with U's comment ("it's your... responsibility as a man, to control yourself"), but even he seems to concede somewhat to U's point (CC: "Yes. I know"), therefore the laughter and lack of verbal disagreement may also be tacit agreement with U's argument.

At a later point however BB challenges the group's use of the WCAR:

**Extract 4b**

BB: And I think, the *statement* isn't that... like women dressed in a certain way causes rape, I don't think that's the...

CC: Ja-

AA: No!

[Much loud chatter amongst group members, unclear]

AA: It's not the statement!

CC: Ja (laughing)

[Loud laughter from group]

AA: That's not what I said - it *might*, it *might*.

BB: Like we all said there's, there's various things that contribute [AA: Ja] to...to the high level level of rape in the country-

AA: If you if you think about it that-

BB: And that's one of those things, that's also one of the things, ja-

AA: Exactly, if if if you think about it that way... we we *never*, I *never* heard, I never, like, heard a case, where, a woman, wears, a *long* skirt and with, *big*, I don't know... clothes, who were raped, or something. It's usually the one with maybe [Laughter from group], a skinny jeans or with... something like *really* visual! [Laughter from group] But it's true, and if you just like... (unclear) [Some chatter amongst group] but [CC: That's not true]... men are really *visual* and *physical*.

CC: Ja, that's not true, because even in the case of the the the Congo thingy [BB: Ja] uh...

AA: Ja but the... but the thing is... Congolese are different.

[Loud laughter from group] (Group 6)

Here BB seems to be qualifying that the group does not mean that women's clothing causes rape, a comment which is initially met with a strong reaction from the group, including loud laughter and chatter. The response may once again be a reflection of the controversial nature of the WCAR, yet despite the strong response the group does not discard it, rather coming to the conclusion that it is just "one of the things" (BB) that contributes to

rape in South Africa. Following this, however, AA argues for the importance of its contribution (since he “never” hears about women being raped when they are not wearing revealing clothes<sup>17</sup>), and despite CC’s referring to the situation in Congo to invalidate this argument, AA is unwilling to concede and instead makes a joke which enables him to avoid dealing with this contradiction. Therefore despite challenges raised, ultimately the WCAR is not dismissed by the group as an important factor contributing to rape in South Africa.

In the extract just discussed, women were depicted as being largely unknowing about the nature of the male sexual drive, and educating women about this drive was seen as a possible way to deal with the situation of rape (AA). In the discussion of women’s clothing in Group 1, however, women were depicted far less sympathetically and as knowing about the dangers of wearing “provocative clothing” (Z, Group 1). The following extract summarises some of the key issues mentioned in this group:

***Extract 5***

Z: [...] Women don’t really respect themselves if they can... sort of, wear things like that ‘cause... they don’t respect themselves and they’re not really worried about their safety on the other hand as well [Murmurs of agreement from group] [...] In this day and age it’s getting worse and worse, they’re wearing *less*, and *less* clothing [V: Mm] and... our thresholds, are getting, *lower*, and *lower*, and *lower* [Laughter from some group members], hence, we’re getting more and more rapists. [...] So if we could try and move away from sexual objects, that’s, making, that’s the music videos [V: Ja, ja]... and... the skimpy tops [Murmurs of agreement from group], and go back to how society used to be, where a lady wasn’t allowed to wear... tops that showed her shoulders, and stuff like that, when she’s meeting a man, and the

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<sup>17</sup> This statement could simply be a reflection of the pervasiveness of the WCAR. Alternatively however, it is possible that rape cases in which the victim is dressed in revealing clothes stand out in AA’s memory (whereas other cases do not) because of the attention drawn to these cases by the media. Often when women’s clothes are remarked upon in rape cases (e.g. by judges, the police etc.) there is media opposition to the comments, which may inadvertently emphasise such cases over other cases to the public.

normal courting processes, I feel like things would be better. But *now*, with what they're doing, things are just getting worse. (Group 1)

The comments that women “don’t really respect themselves if they can... sort of, wear things like that” and that “they’re not really worried about their safety”, imply that women are aware of the dangers of wearing such clothing. The link between rape and clothing is also explicitly articulated: “in this day and age it’s getting worse and worse, [women are] wearing *less*, and *less* clothing [V: Mm] and... our thresholds, are getting, *lower*, and *lower*, and *lower* [...], hence, we’re getting more and more rapists”. This notion of women’s clothing as becoming more revealing was also present in Extract 4a (“I even think in myself if, we’re gonna go back to the, naked strip” (U, Group 6)), demonstrating a joint perception that modernisation is linked to women’s increased use of “provocative” clothing. In such a way, women’s wearing of “less clothing” in modern times is explicitly blamed for causing the high levels of rape in South Africa, depicting women as largely culpable for their own victimisation. This is in line with the findings in Wojcicki’s (2002) study, with one participant saying that in Soweto, girls’ clothing “is the cause that makes these boys to rape these girls” (p. 278).

Use of the terms “provocative”, “provoking”, and “provoke”, each used within the groups in reference to women’s clothing (and also used in rape perception research, e.g. Kanekar & Kolsawalla, 1980), is in itself worth problematizing. It is commonplace terminology, yet inherent in the word ‘provoke’ is the idea of eliciting something from someone, or causing someone to act or feel something, in this instance sexual desire. However, in combination with some of the other assumptions demonstrated in the data, it follows that a provocation of desire may be tantamount to a provocation to have sex with a woman (even if she is unwilling), since (some) men are seen as not being able to control themselves once sexually aroused. Therefore, the term “provocative”, when used to refer to women’s clothing (or lack thereof), can even be interpreted as referring to their clothing’s ability to provoke men to rape, the central component of the WCAR. The word “provoke” furthermore attributes agency to the clothing/women wearing the clothing, with the man/rapist positioned simply as the object of the provocation. This can once again be seen as a demonstration of the DMSD, as the elicitation of the man’s sexual arousal leads him to be out of control of his actions (and thus not blameworthy).

Within the discussions there are several challenges made to the idea that women’s clothing is responsible for rape. These include that it does not explain: the rape of infants or

old women (e.g. “Cause the [...] babies aren’t wearing anything skimpy” (S, Group 1)); why South African women who were “topless” in villages were raped less often than women today (CC, Group 6); or why there has been mass rape in the Congo (CC) (see Baaz & Stern, 2009). CC also argues that men should be able to control themselves despite seeing women dressed revealingly. The majority of these points were brought up by CC, who had identified himself as a student of gender studies and located some of his arguments as from this source.

The argument that it does not explain the rape of infants or old women could be used to undermine the WCAR. However, within the data rape of infants is constructed as being in an entirely different category to the rape of women; rapists of infants are referred to as “phapha” (M, Group 1; *phapha* being slang meaning ‘too much’ or ‘too forward’) and infant rape is described as having “deeper psychological meaning” (J, Group 5). This renders the rape (and rapists) of infants and adult women incomparable, thereby making this point largely inconsequential for the WCAR. Furthermore, Z (Group 1) argues that women’s clothing is in fact also the cause of infant rape, as men may resort to raping infants if they are aroused by a woman’s clothing yet unable to have sex with an adult. The other challenges made to the WCAR are either ignored (e.g. CC’s point about women previously being topless and yet being raped less); overtly dismissed as untrue (see Extract 4a); or else dismissed with a joke (see Extract 4b). Therefore, although participants mention challenges to WCAR (and thus to the DMSD), ultimately it is not dismissed. The durability of this account, despite evidence presented against its validity, may be a demonstration of its pervasiveness as well of the strength of its underlying assumptions. As noted by Burt and Estep (1981), “ideology controls the search for ‘facts’ and influences their interpretation should contradictory ones inconveniently surface” (p. 24).

**Drunk women providing men with the ‘opportunity’ to rape: “You had it coming”.** In the above arguments women’s sexually “provocative” clothing and behaviour is constructed as being an important element of what causes rape, and in some instances women are depicted as knowing about the dangers of wearing revealing clothing but not acting responsibly. Similarly, the idea that women are responsible for their own rape if they get drunk operates on the assumption that women know the nature of the male sexual drive, and therefore know that if they drink they are likely to be taken advantage of. G argues (here and elsewhere) that women need to take responsibility for the consequences of their getting drunk. Here he uses the analogy of drinking and driving, comparing this scenario to women getting drunk and being raped:



**Extract 6**

G: Can I ask a question. If I go to a club, and I get really drunk, and I decide to get into my car and drive, and then the policeman stops me and says, 'okay, you were drunk and you got in your car', then I say, 'ah, but I was too drunk to decide and make a, good decision', I don't think that cuts it, as a reason, for not going to jail.

H: But you see with, with blurring the, the *rape* thing with examples of things that *aren't* rape-

G: Look I'm saying, the *logic*, is the same. Because... *my* logic is, a person should take responsibility, for their actions, right? So, if you're gonna go... That's why even when you co – when you come here, first year they tell you, if you're gonna go to a club, it's goo- go with your friends, don't go *alone*, and then get wasted. Because... I mean, you don't know what you're gonna do. You take that responsibility of saying, 'okay, these are my friends, we're going to a club', and those people, take care of you, so... you shouldn't offset your own actions to other people is what I'm saying. If you are drunk... It's the same thing, if you're drunk and you get in a car and you drive, you can't say 'oh... um well, there's the parking guy, and he gave me my keys and let me go, so I think it's his fault and you should put *him* in prison', like, seriously, you need to take responsibility.

Researcher: So, if you're drunk... If *you* go out and you choose to get drunk on your own, and then, for instance – 'cause I think, it's it's... it's *harder* if someone then goes and tries if, a girl gets very drunk and then she goes and, *tries* to have sex with someone I mean I think that would be, a much more complicated one for us, to work out but, if you pass out, for instance, then what would you say about that situation?<sup>18</sup>

F: It's *your* fault. When you go into a club, the first thing that you see, they say 'drink responsibly', [K: Mm] so *you know* that when you have passed out things can happen to you, like, you *know*, you have experience with alcohol and whatever, you know like, 'this is my limit I must not exceed this limit' or things will – there *are*

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<sup>18</sup> Earlier in the discussion the scenario is mentioned regarding when a girl is actively pursuing sex but is drunk, hence this attempt at clarification.

consequences if I exceed this limit... So even if you pass out it's... it's *still* kind of your fault. (Group 3)

In this discussion the rape victim is unequivocally blamed for being raped ("It's *your* fault" (F)). Although I have only quoted F, G and H here, the other group members on several occasions expressed agreement with F and G pertaining to women's responsibility for their own victimization whilst drinking, whilst H notably continued to challenge this argument.

H's comment that G was "blurring [the] *rape* thing with examples of things that *aren't* rape" refers to the several analogies that G drew between being raped whilst drunk and other various scenarios, in addition to the drinking and driving example given in the above extract. These included getting drunk and going to lectures; selling a car whilst drunk; having sex whilst drunk when one planned on waiting until marriage; and lying on a highway and getting ridden over by a car. Interestingly, in all of these examples, there is either no representation of the rape perpetrator (for drinking and driving or drinking and going to lectures the *victim* is notably depicted in the role of offender) or else the person 'perpetrating' the act is not seen as being guilty for the situation (e.g. buying a car from a drunk person, arresting a drunk driver or driving over someone lying in the highway). Thus in each instance the guilt is placed entirely upon the person representing the rape victim in the analogy. Anderson and Doherty (2008) note how "metaphorical concepts offer a particular or partial understanding of the phenomenon in question, hiding or highlighting different aspects of the events or people under discussion" (p. 8). Relating this to the above extract, the analogies used can therefore be seen as performing the discursive purpose of hiding the role of the perpetrators of rape and alternatively highlighting the victims' culpability.

An analogy in which there is an acknowledgement of the wrong-doing of the perpetrator was only elicited later within this group when I explicitly drew attention to the perpetrator in the scenario:

### ***Extract 7***

Researcher: Okay, so just with regards to then, this last example that I used, with the girl, that passed out, what do you think the reason would be that someone would

feel like it's okay well then a man would, to, to have sex<sup>19</sup> with her while she is passed out, in this club, why do you think, someone would do that?

F: Opportunity. She's vulnerable it's... ja.

Researcher: She's what?

F: She vu- she's vulnerable and you, you have a chance I mean...

G: Okay I wouldn't say it's right but then, um... I would kind of say you had it coming.

Q: Ja.

M: But I wouldn't say it's right that it happened.

Researcher: But why would the person do it, do you think.

Q: It would be taking uh, it's would be taking advantage knowing that if... if maybe they go to court or something they would tell – you would say that you were drunk, that you did agree, and you can't, *you* can't, remember what I was doing, not that you, got raped.

G: But I don't think a *normal* person would take advantage of that sit- *type* of situation, it's only... Okay, 'cause I think what people also don't understand is okay the... uh... even amongst, let's say, black people, there're *good* black people, there're *normal* black people, and there're *bad* black people. So a *bad* black person might take advantage of that situation<sup>20</sup>. And then ev – people want to claim that *all* black people are like that. So I think, there *will* be that someone, who will... take advantage of the situation and, *I* don't think it's right, but I would say, you kind of had it coming, just like, if you were to, lie in the road, in the highway, and... just sleep there, you *kind* of had it coming if you have a car run over you, not saying that

<sup>19</sup> As previously mentioned, framing rape as “sex” is problematic in that it diminishes the severity of the crime and the harm done to the victim (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), and although unintentional my use of the term here can therefore be seen as problematic in terms of the message conveyed to the participants.

<sup>20</sup> This unprompted reference to race is also interesting, because although G (self-identified as black) is quick to say that not all black people would take advantage of the situation, the comment seems to demonstrate the assumption that the rapist in such a situation would be black, which is a construction I will discuss later.

it's right. Or if you get mugged<sup>21</sup>, because you're walking at... two a.m. [K: Ja], holding your laptop in your hand [F: (Laughs)], it's not *good* that you get mugged but you had it coming. Because you *know* what... the thing is... So if the person's caught, ja I think, they should still go to prison, but... you know, some things you just have to be responsible I think. (Group 3)

In accordance with the noted absence of perpetrator culpability in G's previous analogies, in the first few reactions to the question at the beginning of this extract the group do not attribute any wrong-doing to the perpetrator, describing him as simply taking up the "opportunity" that presented itself in which the woman is "vulnerable" (F) and the perpetrator unlikely to face any negative consequences (Q). Thereafter, although G says he does not think "a *normal* person would take advantage of that [...] *type* of situation", his analogies still depict the rape as an avoidable scenario for which the woman was responsible. Even when a perpetrator is present (i.e. the mugging analogy), the woman is still depicted as almost entirely responsible for being raped by putting herself at risk through drinking. Women are thus depicted as being reckless in the face of such obvious 'risks'. Anderson and Doherty (2008) argue that these 'risks' themselves are social constructions, and that, "what is 'risky' for women and men can be seen to function to maintain gender power relations and gendered norms of behaviour" (p. 9). The DMSD underlies this construction of 'risk' pertaining to women's drinking, as it is assumed that the (male) rapist would simply take up the 'opportunity' that presented itself. Since the male's sexual drive is seen as uncontrollable, in such a way the DMSD allows for the construction of women as being to blame for their own rape if they have been drinking.

**Love and male sexuality: "We're *all* looking for love".** In Extract 4a, in line with the DMSD, U comments that seeing a woman in revealing clothing makes a man, "want that woman [...], *not*, because you *love* her but *because* you desire" (Group 6). Alternatively, in certain discussions (within four of the groups) men's perpetration of rape was depicted as

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<sup>21</sup> McEwan (2007) argues that the 'rape as mugging' analogy demonstrates "how deeply ingrained the notion of women's bodies as property is" (unpaginated).

being related to 'love'. This account is interesting in that it is contrary to depictions of heterosex found within much of the research and also elsewhere in the discussions (e.g. see Extract 4a), where women are depicted as being more emotionally attached to sex (e.g. Crawford et al., 1994; Farvid & Braun, 2006; Hollway, 1989; Shefer & Foster, 2001) and men's sexuality is alternatively depicted as being a primarily physical drive (i.e. the DMSD). Unlike accounts of rape which blame the victim's clothing or drinking, within the data the accounts that connected love to rape focused on the perpetrators of rape. Raping was seen as being related to love in the discussions in multiple different ways: as a way of escaping the feeling of not being loved; as enabling the rapist to imagine his victim loves him; as an attempt to gain love from the victim; as a result of not receiving love as a child; as a result of confusing sex with love; or as because one was sexually abused as a child and uses rape as a demonstration of love. Although its usage was far less pervasive than the DMSD, the notion of 'love' as being an important aspect of male sexuality is decidedly absent from the DMSD in many instances, and therefore can possibly be seen as a competing discourse surrounding male sexuality. Alternatively, the fact that men's need for love is conflated with their need for sex can be conceptualised as an intersection of the DMSD with constructions of the importance of love for males.

The following extract, in which love is constructed as being closely connected to sex, demonstrates some of the ways in which love and rape were connected within the data:

**Extract 8**

E: I think I think another thing that, with sex is, people associate sex with love. I think.

D: I also agree with you ja that's right.

O: Ja. 'Cause you find that like, even even in, in any relationship, some people will feel, *satisfied* or *fulfilled* with it with *just...* a relationship without sex, they think that they should get sex, for it to be a *proper* relationship, you find it in any... in UCT, go around. It's there. People think that sex... is...*it*. Is...*love*. So if you don't – if, as a girl, you don't have, *sex* with a guy, you're *out*. The you don't lo- you you, you find thinks like 'oh you don't love me' [D: Mm hm] or 'you're sleeping with someone else' and yada yada yada, and then you find that the girl feels pressure and then eventually she gives in, *or*, the guy puts so much pressure the girl is not *into* it and then, maybe... he ends up raping her.

A: But-

E: Just, just to prove that [D: He loves her] he loves her, and *she* loves him *back*. But he actually doesn't *think* that forcing it on her is not the way forward.

D: Ja 'cause, people, are always looking for like, *belonging* you know [E: Ja] and they see that sex like you say, as an act of-

E: 'Cause like I think I think... so some people think, the... it might be that they think that if, you have sex with her, she will love you afterwards [D: Mm]. Which is-

D: And we're *all* looking for love.

E: Ja. (Group 4)

In this extract, in the context of romantic heterosexual relationships men are depicted as potentially raping girls in order both to *feel* loved as well as to *demonstrate* love, with D arguing that a guy may rape a girl "just to prove that [...] he loves her, and *she* loves him *back*". Although sex is depicted elsewhere in the data as being related to love primarily for women, in this extract the desire for love is depicted as being across genders, with D commenting that "we're *all* looking for love". This is congruent with Malinga and Ratele's (2012) Cape Town study which found that love was a significant element of young men's construction of their masculinities, particularly in the context of their heterosexual romantic relationships. In the above extract, males are even depicted as leaving girls who do not have sex with them primarily because they associate sex with love. This construction of the importance of sexual intercourse in romantic heterosexual relationships reflects Wood and Jewkes (1997) findings that, "If girls accepted male requests to establish a liaison, the agreement 'to love' here, as in other parts of South Africa [...], was equated specifically with having penetrative intercourse and being available sexually" (p. 42). This construction can also be seen as relating to Hird and Jackson's (2001) findings that males made use of arguments such as "you would have sex with me if you loved me" (p. 29) and that girls sometimes agreed to sex out of fear of losing boyfriends. This extract therefore depicts love as being an integral part of a romantic relationship, with sex (or rape) being a reflection of love in this context.

This construction of rape as a demonstration of love is clearly problematic, and it can be seen as a demonstration of the lack of clear distinction between consensual sex and rape (particularly in the context of a romantic relationship), since the meanings attributed to the former are seen as being transferable to the latter. This seems to be particularly relevant within the frame of heterosexual relationships, as men's rape of partners can be constructed as an expression of love. This link between rape and love may therefore have a problematic

effect on men's subjective experiences of their sexual aggression within romantic heterosexual relationships as well as their partners' interpretations of it.

In this account, and within other accounts in the data, love is constructed as being related to sex, and forced sex through rape is therefore seen as a means of giving or receiving love. The conflation of love/sex can possibly be seen as relating to Brod's (1995) argument that men may seek to utilize sex to satisfy nonsexual needs for intimacy as a result of their being trained by society to deny such needs. In line with this argument, elsewhere within the discussions the emotional elements of sex were constructed as being primarily related to women, which therefore may depict them as un-masculine. It has been argued that the fragility of masculinity may create a fear of femininity in men's lives, with a corresponding restriction of emotions considered 'feminine' and their expression (O'Neill et al., 1986; Kaufman, 1994; Kimmel, 1994). The repression of emotion has thus been constructed as an element of masculinity in several different contexts (Brannon, 1976; Luyt, 2003; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neill, 1981), as has self-reliance (Brannon, 1976; Mahalik et al., 2003), both of which can be seen as incongruent with the need to express love and to feel love. However, whereas love has been 'feminized' (Malinga & Ratele, 2012), the need for sex is alternatively constructed as an integral part of masculinity (i.e. the DMSD). Therefore the conflation of sex and love can be seen as enabling men to desire love, if it is in the form of sex, whilst still maintaining appropriate masculinity.

The connections between love and rape are thus represented within the data in several ways. Although the DMSD does not contain notions of love, discourses relating male sexual behaviour to love may not be incompatible with the DMSD, and the DMSD may furthermore be seen as a mediator in the relationship between men's need for love and their need to maintain masculine status.

**Implications of the Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive.** In summary, the DMSD was an important resource participants drew on to explain why some men rape in South Africa. Men were constructed as having to "resort" to rape when consensual sex was not available to them; women's clothing was seen as being able to arouse men to the point that their actions were not within their control; and men were not assigned responsibility for having sex with a drunk (and even unconscious) woman. Men were depicted as being unable to control their sexual drives and therefore not truly culpable for raping, and alternatively women were positioned as being largely responsible for rape through provoking sexual desire in men or providing men with opportunities to rape. Significant problematic implications with the

DMSD then are that it 1) promotes victim-blaming, and 2) diminishes perpetrator responsibility.

Within the framework of the DMSD, Burt and Estep (1981 as cited in Anderson & Doherty, 2008) argue that women are positioned as sexual ‘gatekeepers’ who can be blamed for their own rapes in their failures to prevent them, because men “are at the mercy of a primal biological sex drive [and] can’t possibly be held accountable either for becoming sexually aroused or for their actions when aroused” (p. 8). The DMSD therefore supports victim-blaming accounts of rape such as the ones presented, which in turn support the argument that women can protect themselves from rape if they simply wear conservative clothing, avoid getting drunk or refuse gifts<sup>22</sup> from men they do not want to have sex with. This is a gross misrepresentation of the reality of rape in South Africa and elsewhere (Gqola, 2007).

Furthermore, such rape myths as those presented in the data can worsen rape victims’ experiences, both in terms of their subjective interpretation of their rape and in others’ reactions towards them. Victim-blaming discourses reduce the likelihood of victims reporting rape; increase the likelihood of secondary victimisation (and traumatisation) for those who do report being raped; reduce the amount of support rape victims are likely to receive upon disclosing that they are raped; and moreover contribute towards exculpating perpetrators of the responsibility of their attacks (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).

The DMSD is further problematic in the way it represents the perpetrators of rape, as well as men in general, which in turn will affect how perpetrators of rape are viewed as well as how they experience their own actions. In most of the discussions regarding women’s clothing and drinking, focus was placed on the responsibility and culpability of the victims whilst the character and motives of the hypothetical rapists went mostly unexamined. Anderson and Doherty (2008) argue that this lack of attention to the personal character of the rapist construes that he is a ‘subhuman monster/beast’, and therefore in accounts like this the rapist “is constructed as part of the hazard to be avoided rather than as an agent in the rape and, at the same time, as unaccountable for the rape due to his subhuman monster/beast

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<sup>22</sup> Discussed later.



status” (p. 121). Alternatively, contrary to G’s point that “a *normal* person” would not rape a girl who is passed out, the lack of focus on the individual rapist in other instances can be read as an indication that the characters of the rapists were not seen as being particularly noteworthy or exceptional, i.e. they are simply men reacting with rape to situations that evoke it and “can’t be blamed for simply taking what was unambiguously (even willingly) offered” (ibid, p. 114). This can further be seen as an example of what I previously referred to as the discourse of ‘Man’s Natural Rapaciousness’ (Everitt-Penhale, 2010, term taken from Bourke, 2007), a logical extension of the DMSD, wherein men are constructed as having a natural rape proclivity. In such a way, the DMSD normalises sexual aggression (and possibly even rape) in men, enabling rapists to be viewed by others as not truly responsible for their actions, and thus less blameworthy. Hollway (1989) went so far as to posit that “male judges’ tendency to impose lenient sentences on rapists is a result of the dominance of the male sexual drive discourse and their own identification with the position it confers on men” (p. 54)<sup>23</sup>.

In terms of subjectivity, the DMSD can be seen as having a potentially problematic influence on how boys and men experience their sexual urges and behaviours. By constructing sexual aggression as part of masculinity, this discourse positions such aggression as normal or even desirable for males. Furthermore, by constructing male sexuality as a natural, uncontrollable biological drive, it allows for males to interpret their sexual aggression as being a result of their natures, not of their decisions. Their agency is diminished as their behaviours are attributed to an uncontrollable force, allowing for men not to take responsibility for their sexual aggression, including rape. In such a way, Willig (2008) argues that the DMSD, “allows a man not only to publicly disclaim responsibility for an act of sexual aggression, but to actually *feel* less guilty about it” (p. 117). The importance of perpetrators taking responsibility for their actions was demonstrated by the findings that

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<sup>23</sup> Supporting the notion that the DMSD may influence (male) judges’ perceptions of accused rapists are the comments made by Judge van der Merwe in the Jacob Zuma rape trial in South Africa, where he “lambasted Zuma for [...] being unable to control his sexual desires” and quoted Kipling, saying “If you can control your sexual urges, then you are a man, my son” (Robins, 2006, p. 155).

within a prison setting, those men who were asked to take responsibility for their crimes were less likely to be recidivist than those who were not (Dobash et al., 2000 as cited in Sikweyiya et al., 2007). Therefore it is possible to surmise that the DMSD could influence men's repeat perpetration of sexual violence.

In summary, it is argued that the primary issues with the use DMSD within the context of rape are that it allows for victim-blaming and removes responsibility from the rapist. The presence of such victim-blaming arguments in any context is highly problematic with regards to ensuring that rape victims get the support and justice they deserve and perpetrators are rightfully assigned full culpability for their crimes.

Through examining the DMSD it is clear that within the data men and women's sexuality is constructed as quite distinct from one another, with AA (Group 6) exclaiming that he has tried to explain the nature of male sexual desire to his girlfriend but she does not "get it" (Extract 4a). This leads us to the different constructions of the meaning and roles behind men and women's participation in heterosex.

### **Heterosex**

In the discussions, by utilising an essentialist discourse of gender in conjunction with the DMSD, men are depicted not only as unable to control their sexual urges, but these urges are also constructed as naturally and inherently heterosexual. This reflects the notion of heterosexuality as an important part of constructions of masculinity, which has also been found in numerous other contexts (e.g. Aoesved & Long, 2006; Herek, 1987, 1995; Kimmel, 1994; Morrell & Swart, 2005; Niehaus, 2005; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). Heterosex within the data was constructed as having dissimilar meanings for boys/men and girls/women, also consistent with the findings demonstrated in the literature (e.g. Carpenter, 2002; Crawford et al., 1994; Gavey, 1992; Gavey, 2005; Holland et al., 1996; Hird & Jackson, 2001; Jackson & Cram, 2003; Miles, 1992; Mankayi, 2008; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Wight, 1994; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Men and women were depicted as having very different experiences of sex and contrasting values were placed on their sexual activities. Boys were described as gaining respect from their peers for having sex and as not being respected if they did not, to the extent that they were seen as possibly forcing a girl to have sex to be able to report it back to their peers. Conversely, girls/women were seen as feeling ashamed of having sex (and as being likely to lie about being raped in order to avoid such shame); as having less value once they have had sex; and as being of questionable moral character if they have had multiple sexual partners. These representations are a reflection of the 'sexual double standard', in which men

are praised for their sexual activity and women are shamed for it (e.g. see Jackson & Cram, 2003). Despite the presence in some discussions of descriptions of men as wanting sex for its connection to love (as previously discussed), women were more often seen as having more of an emotional attachment to sex than men and were furthermore seen as having sex primarily for its connection to being in a relationship. In this section, I will examine extracts which relate to men and women's differing relationships to heterosex, as well as the importance that is placed on one's sexuality in relation to one's value as a man or woman.

**Guys and heterosex: “The first question they always ask, ‘have you had sex with her?’”.** Reflecting the conceptualisation of rape as a performance of masculinity for other men as well as for the perpetrator himself, within the data having sex was depicted as very important for boys/men in order for them to achieve masculinity in the eyes of their peers as well as for their own self-worth, to such an extent that they were seen as possibly resorting to sexual aggression in order to meet these standards. The notion of male peer pressure influencing sexual aggression is therefore in line with the argument that male homosocial bonds are often essential components in how men shape their sexual relations with women, sometimes problematically (Flood, 2008; Gross, 1978; Kanin, 1967; Wight, 1994). For instance, these factors reflect findings that some boys' primary motivations for engaging in heterosex is to gain esteem from peers (Gross, 1978; Wight, 1994), as well as the findings of a positive correlation between men's perceptions of peer pressure to have sex with their self-reported sexually aggressive behaviour (Kanin, 1967).

The pressure males exert on each other and the importance of (hetero)sexual activity for males' self-esteem make sense in light of the dominance of the DMSD as well as the essentialist account of gender. If sexually aggressive behaviour is constructed as masculine (DMSD) then in turn it is constructed as being a typical or desirable behaviour for males, putting pressure on males to exhibit such behaviour. Such pressure was described in the following extract:

***Extract 9***

A: And the thing, I want to add, is like, us as guys, we give each other pressure. Like-  
[Laughter from group]

E: Like if you *didn't* go for someone-

D: Ja-

[Laughter]

A: Ja for someone else ja and like, *everything* is fine, the girl is okay but they just not ready to have sex with you like, at that particular point, but, just 'cause your boys like you just wanna like, get it actually [E: Ja] like boast that you got it all [E: Ja] you just... push the whole thing.

D: Ja, pressure.

A: 'Cause then –

E: It's true, it's true.

O: Even last year I was working in a spaza shop in (unclear) in P.E., [A: Ja] a township in P.E., and then I noticed something there 'cause, anytime I like sat inside the shop so, people came to me and then chi – people just chilled there and then I could see the interactions, and I could see the, like guys, [A: Mm hm] twelve-, twelve-, thirteen-year-olds, [A: Mm hm] and if a guy's saying 'I have this girlfriend' and what not, the *first* question they always ask, 'have you had sex with her?'

A: Mm, ja... (laughingly)

E: Mm hm (affirmative).

O: If he says '*no*', they'll be like 'aaaah' (dismissive) they won't be interested they'll be... talking to someone else [A: Ja] so-

A: Ja that's actually-

O: I always noticed the guy... 'oh I have a girlfriend'

'Have you had sex?'

'No'.

He'd always feel down, so, now... and I think like he's under pressure [E: Mm] to go to that girl and have sex [A: Mm!] and imagine that girl refuses.

E: So then he'll (unclear).

O: Ja... Now the girl refuses and won't won't have sex with you... He's gonna feel like he's an outcast to the guys so he's gonna, *forcefully* take her, like forcefully have sex with her, the girl, and then go back to the guys and say 'no I had sex with her'. And then they will accept who I am 'okay now you can come' [A: Ja]. It's there... And that's where I noticed that it happened, *all the time*.

A: Ja, true.

O: 'Cause the guy who had sex with most girls who'd be like, 'ja like we had sex', then they'd be looking up to him.

A: Mm hm. (Group 4)

Within this extract, the group describes the pressure upon ‘guys’ to have sex in order to feel accepted by their peers and feel good about themselves. Sex is depicted as the most important thing about heterosexual relationships; O states that when a guy has a girlfriend, “the first question they always ask, ‘have you had sex with her?’”. This reflects the construction (previously discussed) of sex as being an integral part of a romantic heterosexual relationship (e.g. see Wood & Jewkes, 1997). Having multiple sexual partners is also constructed in this extract as being desirable for a man (“the guy who had sex with most girls [...] they’d be looking up to him” (O)), reflecting findings in other research in South Africa (e.g. Hunter, 2004; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). Varga (1997 as cited in Wojcicki, 2002) noted how this bias is reflected in the Zulu language, with *isoka* (a man with many partners) being a compliment<sup>24</sup> whereas *isishimane* (a man with none) is derogatory. These constructions of the importance of heterosexual activity for males within the data can be seen as reflecting what is referred to in the literature as the ‘heterosexual imperative’, whereby males are seen as needing to demonstrate heterosexual activity in order to be socially accepted and/or live up to masculine ideals (e.g. Curry, 1991; Niehaus, 2005; Renold, 2007; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wight, 1994), as well as the construction of sexual virility as being an important element of masculinity (e.g. see Baaz & Stern, 2009; Campbell, 2001; Hunter, 2005; Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Having sex is also depicted in the extract as important for a guy’s self-esteem, which is in line with males’ attachment to the ideals of masculinity and the importance of feeling masculine for their feelings of self-worth (Kimmel, 1993).

Heterosex is therefore constructed within the data as a positive thing for males, through which a boy can earn respect from his peers, and without which he may feel “down” and like “an outcast” (O), to the extent that he may rape a girl in order to be accepted. Reflecting findings from both the South African and international literature, heterosexual activity was thus constructed within the data as being an important element of masculinity, encouraged by

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<sup>24</sup> Although Hunter (2004) found that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is causing a change in people’s perceptions of *amasoka* (men with many sexual partners).

male homosocial groups, with having sex (particularly with multiple partners) constructed as a way in which a male can gain self-esteem and respect from peers.

**Girls and heterosex:** “Girls who are virgins, actually have that respect”. In contrast to constructions of the meaning of heterosex for males, for a female having sex is not constructed as being a positive thing, but rather as something that they could feel ashamed about, that they could regret, and that can strip them of their value. This is virtually opposite to how it is constructed for men; girls and woman are seen as having more respect when they do not have sex and less respect when they do, and much in the same way that boys are constructed as having negative feelings about *not* having sex, girls are constructed as having negative feelings when they *do* have sex. This was reflected in the data through talk on why women might lie about being raped, as well as in discussions depicting the meaning of participating (or not participating) in heterosexual activity for girls.

In several of the discussions on rape in South Africa, women were presented as being likely to make false rape accusations, primarily because of their gendered experiences of heterosex. Statistics, both locally and internationally, indicate that only a fraction of rapes perpetrated are reported, and yet the belief that women are likely to make false accusations of rape still received strong support. This notion of women being likely to make false reports of rape has been demonstrated elsewhere in South Africa: The men in Sikweyiya and colleagues’ (2007) study argued that women often lie about being raped after they had agreed to sex because they “changed their minds” or “to protect their reputations” (p. 51), and Zuma (as quoted by Robins, 2006) argued during his trial that in Zulu culture, a risk of leaving a woman in a state of sexual arousal was that “She could even have you arrested for rape” (p. 163).

Burt and Estep (1981) found that there are primarily three cultural assumptions people based their arguments on for why women are likely to lie about rape, each of which is drawn on in the data at different times: the first relates to “the cultural stereotype [that] women are vindictive and malicious”; the second is that women “like and want sex, but don’t like to take responsibility for having it”; and the third relates to women’s perceived emotionality and potential for hysteria, maintaining that “women are prone to imagine or fantasize sexual encounters, especially rape, and therefore make up the whole thing” (p. 20). In South Africa until 1998, a bias against the veracity of women’s accusations in rape cases was part of legislation in the form of the ‘cautionary rule’. This rule “stated that women who laid rape charges were particularly unreliable witnesses [...] and that their evidence thus needed to be approached with caution” (Vetten, 2007, p. 440), reflecting “a cultural prejudice that women

habitually lie about rape” (Andrews, 1998-1999, p. 454). Although it fortunately no longer exists in South Africa, the assumptions that underpin this rule were clearly drawn upon within the discussions in order to discredit women’s reports of rape. Within the groups, reasons given for why a woman might lie about rape included if she regrets having sex and/or is ashamed; if she is wronged by a man and wants revenge; if she has psychological problems; if she likes receiving sympathy from others; and if her romantic aspirations with a man are thwarted after she has already had sex with him. It was also argued that poorer women were more likely to make false rape accusations, with wealthy or powerful men seen as the likely victims of these accusations.

In the following extract, N had just described the Jacob Zuma rape trial and his accuser’s subsequent humiliation:

**Extract 10**

N: It’s difficult to prove yes like I said also, and earlier on women are humiliated in the whole, in the whole process, [...] if a woman goes to report that in the police station, but when they press, a rape case, it’s a it’s it’s it’s like it starts this kind of debate, and sexism... uh say uh, and the people start being sexist and stuff like that, so, it humiliates her in a demeaning way, so that there two things that prevent her from, from from actually reporting it, first it’s the humiliation, then the second one it’s the possibility of, of, of actually not winning the case, so...

Researcher: And, why do you think, like you said why do you think people are more likely to... believe, the... male? In those circumstances, than the woman?

X: Because... I think women are... um... a lot more –sex is a b- um... If I can put it, in a way like, a bigger *deal*, for women, you know like, women, would often... remember in detail their their first time having sex and even, even though, um... you know he said that that the people thought the woman made it up, um I think in some cases some women *do* make it up [N: Mm] because they have sex, with a man, and then afterwards they feel... ashamed, maybe, and really, really *terrible* about it, and then the- sort of the *only* outcome they can think of is to... say ‘rape’, you know to shout ‘rape’.

Researcher: Y?

Y: I think, from another point I think uh, like no woman would like to come out in public to be humiliated in public and, I don’t think any woman would lie that ‘I was raped’, to get anything from anyone. No one wants to be raped, and I think uh... it’s

just uh, it's the society we live in that that is partially still, patriarchal, that, sees women, as being lower, than men or everything, so like, I think that's the problem like, the society we are living in, is *still*, partially, patriarchal and, the emancipation of women has not taken place like, wholly, a hundred per cent it is not yet a hundred per cent that's why, we... first have to *ask*, we first have to investigate, that is it true that the woman was raped, or what, but... if it's a *male*, we'll say he's, maybe... something happened or what, if it's another way, the other way round, we... quickly... like agree, but if it's a *woman* we have to first investigate if she's saying the truth you have to take DNA tests and what what, so I think, it's just a society we live in that we think, first of all, maybe the women are lying or, the woman was lying or something like that.

X: But, on the other hand... we're saying that men have... you know have psychological reasons and what not, and I think a lot of... women they also they have just as much they're also human beings they also have psychological... reasons for everything they do, and... people, would constitute rape as, you know... something sick... But if you get sick, men, why... can't you say that you also get sick, women? You know. So... um... and some women really enjoy... sympathy from others, they really enjoy... like, receiving sympathy... and... also if... a woman feels that she was wronged, by a man she would... maybe be likely to accuse him of rape in order to... get him back, for something?

[...]

N: Also what he (X) said, earlier on, about women, being like very emotionally attached to the whole... to to to to sex, right, so if if, like one thing is that women, are not... they not, they not like, why, the society, doesn't... easily believe them when they claim rape is that, *if*, let's say a male... Okay, male are much more... are much more... cool, while on the stands and everything like that, they they fine with stuff like that, so if, if like since if, a woman falls, falls victim of, of of something like that, and then, where a male... just has sex with her and then in the morning, he is like 'I'll never ever call you again, I never want to see you... like I want nothing to do with you' whereas a women is of- of- of- or the lady was actually thinking that... they would have a relationship for a lifetime kind of thing 'cause they like painting those pictures into their heads and stuff, a relationship and like lifetime and that, so once it's in the morning, just so silently or rudely the male shows no respect for the women, no value, and then, they break it



off. And then the woman... would would would most likely... like, feel like, they would hate them first and then, would feel like they need to get back to them, and... and even *though*, rape never actually occurred, like at the time of having sex, woman actually gave the consent, but then, because of what happened eventually, she is regretting ever giving, giving that consent. But then she claims it's rape I think that's one of the reasons... people actually use logic like that, to to to re- to re- to to... to not believe, women, as easily as they should. (Group 2)

In this extract the arguments are presented that women do not want to report being raped to the police because they will be humiliated, and yet that women are likely to make false rape accusations. These arguments can be seen as somewhat contradictory, which is elucidated by Y's comment, which alternatively explicitly attributes the fact that women are often regarded as lying about rape to patriarchal bias. Both N's comments about sexism and Y's comments about patriarchy demonstrate the use of a feminist discourse to explain why women are not believed, which challenges the argument that women are prone to making false rape accusations.

The arguments made for why women are seen as likely to lie about being raped were related specifically to their gendered experiences of heterosex. X describes sex as being a "bigger deal" for women, and N describes women's motives for sex as being closely related to having a relationship with the man she had sex with ("they like painting those pictures into their heads and stuff"). In both of these accounts (and elsewhere in the data) women are depicted as using rape accusations as a means of revenge against men who have wronged them, possibly through thwarting their romantic ideals. These descriptions of women's sexuality are very different from the DMSD, and can be seen as a reflection of the Have/Hold discourse (Hollway, 1989), wherein (predominantly women's) sexual activity is seen as being primarily motivated by an investment in a romantic relationship (see also Farvid & Braun, 2006). Such constructions of men and women's different emotional involvement with sex have also been demonstrated in the South African context (e.g. Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). That a woman's reasons for lying are constructed as being specifically related to women *in general's* gendered experience of sex (that they are more emotionally attached and connect sex more closely to romantic relationships) means that all women are therefore open to having their accounts questioned using such reasoning. As is aptly put by N, this is problematic in that the risk is that "people actually use logic like that [...] to not believe, women, as easily as they should".

Apart from being emotionally attached to sex, women are also described as lying because they feel “ashamed” or “really, really *terrible*” (X) about having had sex. In X’s description no reason is given for this regret, besides the fact that sex is a “bigger deal” for women, and this lack of explanation may be because it is regarded as ‘common knowledge’ that women often feel regret after sex. This is likely to be a reflection of the ubiquity of the ‘sexual double standard’, wherein men are praised for having multiple sexual partners and women are denigrated (Hynie & Lydon, 1995; Hunter, 2004; Jackson & Cram, 2003; Mankayi, 2008). In this extract, because this sexual double standard is not explicitly referred to (it is instead simply an underlying assumption of X’s argument), there is no opportunity made available in which to challenge it. The notion that a woman often feels regret after sex is therefore taken to be ‘common sense’, which reinforces the double standard by supporting the idea that it is typical for a woman to regret having sex.

In line with this sexual double standard, yet specifically contextualising the view as being amongst “black people”, in Group 4’s discussion a girl’s virginity was constructed as being an important part of her value and hence having sex is seen as removing her of value. This is demonstrated in the following extract:

***Extract 11***

E: Ja, ja, ‘cause like ‘cause like, like... bringing it back bringing it back to... to.... the skin colour? Black people? [D: Mm hm?] Like, where I come from- virgins. Are. *The thing*. Like, basically... girls who are virgins, actually have that respect, so... like you you you you find guys saying that, *if* I can’t have her, *if* I can’t have her, I’ll do that, *if* I can’t have her I’ll do that.

D: Like they must *prove* it now.

E: No like... You know there’s the, like... uh... Like there’s that virginity testing thing and, like virginity, like *girls’* virginity is *valued* [D: Mm hm], such that, when a girl *gives* you her virginity... that’s *big*. So... most guys are like, *if*... they can’t get the girl. At least get *it* [A: Ja], the one thing that’s valuable *to* her. That way they strip her of... the *value*, kinda. And then they... feel better about themselves. (Group 4)

In this extract, E states that amongst black people “girls who are virgins, actually have that respect”, and that having sex can “strip” a girl of her value<sup>25</sup>. Thus, in contrast to boys/men who gain respect from having sex, girls/women are seen as losing respect. Virginity is constructed as a meaningful object which both belongs to and defines a girl. It is seen as something she can “give” to a guy, reflecting the construction of heterosex as something that a boy/man receives or takes and a girl/woman gives/has taken from her. The fact that having sex is seen as stripping a girl of her “value” also demonstrates the level of importance placed on a woman’s sexuality conforming to a certain social standard.

It is unclear from this extract why so much value is placed upon a girl’s virginity, but research into the meaning behind virginity testing in South Africa found the practice to be historically linked to efforts to ensure that “children were born within the boundaries of the patriline” (Scorgie, 2002, p. 61), with its recent resurgence alternatively linked to HIV/AIDS (ibid.). Leclerc-Madlala (2001) argues that women and women’s sexuality are constructed as being “at the epicentre of blame for the current AIDS epidemic amongst the Zulu” (p. 537), with the spread of the disease discussed by her informants as almost exclusively being passed from men to women. Being a virgin was further constructed within these contexts as having meaning beyond simply the physical, signalling a girl is “morally pure” (Scorgie, 2002, p. 61), whereas being found to not be a virgin is to be “marked with shame and disgrace” (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001, p. 540). It has also been proposed that the link between morality and sex in South African discourse has also been influenced by Christianity (Delius & Glaser, 2002), with Hunter’s (2004) study in Kwazulu-Natal finding that “while most informants said that a woman’s restriction to have only one boyfriend was part of a timeless Zulu *umthetho* (law), tellingly some sourced the rule as coming from God” (p. 134). The construction of the importance of a girl’s virginity in this extract may therefore reflect influences from factors such as these.

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<sup>25</sup> The fact that the “guys” are constructed as “[feeling] better about themselves” after they rape a girl relates to the notion that, for men, having power over someone is a means of achieving a feeling of self-worth, discussed later.

In Extract 11 a girl is seen as having less value once she has had sexual intercourse, and further along this continuum the following extract demonstrates the negative construction of girls who have multiple sexual partners:

**Extract 12**

E: It's easy to rape when you didn't rape, 'cause, for a girl, as a guy, I could be chilling in my room and a girl could go file – say, go to the cops and say, I raped her, before they ask me anything, I'll be in a slammer.

A: Sjoe.

D: Mm.

E: 'Cause I I I I know someone who actually had-

O: Ja me too.

E: ...that misfortune. Like, okay, with *him*, he actually *did* sleep with the girl. But then... they had a fight in the morning (pause). And then *after* that the girl said, he raped, *her*. It was only after *two months*, that, my boy was out.

D: And no they didn't like, question him, or anything, just straight into the...?

E: They took him to the... Like, they wanted him to say 'yes'. He told them he didn't rape her but, they said, '*you raped her*', so he had to say, 'yes I raped her'. But then eventually the girl came forward and said, 'he didn't rape me'.

D: Jeez.

O: 'Cause my... 'Cause I knew a guy as well, he was my friend, he was only released after, the weekend. Because it was a Friday night, they got drunk, he took the girl, they went to his room, the girl didn't want to have sex so, the guy was like... It was like 3am and the guy was like 'no, just leave, if you're not going to have sex with me just leave'. And then it was like 3am so the guy, he kind of changed his mind because he feels sorry because it's like 3am, if the girl goes out I mean, there's a higher chance she gets raped. So then he was like 'no come back just sleep'. And then the thing is she slept – they didn't have sex – but I think the girl was angry in the morning or something, and the next thing the guy wakes up there are cops knocking on his room, he gets arrested. But the thing is the... the community knew the girl was like, she was, I don't want to say it but, but she was a whore like, she went, *sleeping around*, and I think she was angry the guy didn't sleep with, sleep with her or something, and the guy got arrested, and then the community, they came out and they went to her home and then they forced her, they took her to the police

[D: To say that-] ja and then she just told the truth and the guy was released. (Group 4)

Within this extract, men are once again depicted as being very vulnerable to women's false accusations of rape, and they are also depicted as being disadvantaged in the legal system<sup>26</sup>. Women (in particular women who have had sex with multiple partners) are also constructed as being less trustworthy than men. Anderson and Doherty (2008) argue that the tendency to disbelieve women's rape accusations rests in "the cultural stereotype of femininity that constructs women as manipulative and vindictive" (p. 7), which seems also to be the case within the current data.

Furthermore, within O's account a girl having multiple sexual partners is seen as being a negative thing, as is demonstrated with the pejorative "whore" and through the fact that because the girl has had other sexual partners she is regarded as untrustworthy, and is thus forced by the community to retract her accusation. The guy is alternatively presented in a sympathetic manner; he "feels sorry" for the girl and worries that she might get raped. Whether the girl could have been telling the truth is not considered in either account, and in O's anecdote it is clear that the fact the girl is a "whore" is regarded as removing her respect and credibility as a person. Within this story, originally O states that the girl did not want to have sex with the guy, and then later he suggests she may have been angry that the guy did not sleep with her. This inconsistency makes sense in light of the fact that O is supporting the argument that her accusation is false; he draws attention to her alleged promiscuity in order to damage her credibility and support his argument, which demonstrates the underlying assumption that a girl that has multiple sexual partners (that is "sleeping around") is lacking in moral character. Similarly, within the scenario mentioned by E, it is assumed that the woman is lying despite the fact that the accused confessed. Contrary then to the depictions of men as vulnerable to false accusations of rape and at a disadvantage, in both of the scenarios

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<sup>26</sup> How black men in particular are disadvantaged by the legal system in relation to rape was discussed extensively in Group 3, which is addressed further in the following section.

mentioned the accused rapists' accounts are taken-for-granted to be true by the narrators as well as the community (in O's account).

The fact that women who have multiple sexual partners are constructed as being morally lacking can be regarded as an example of the 'sexual double standard' in action. It is also a demonstration of the fact that the constructed meaning of a woman's sexual activity has a broader scope than simply the sexual arena, extending to being seen as a reflection of her moral character. This is similar to Mankayi's (2008) findings in the South African military, in which she found that in relation to sexual activity, "women are heavily stigmatized for breaking with dominant social norms of responsibility and fidelity, while men need to do so in order to achieve masculinity" (p. 632).

Such constructions are problematic in that they place severe limits on women's freedom of sexual expression (in ways that do not apply equally to men); the right to which McFadden (2003) argues has been severely neglected within the African context. It has also been argued that sexuality is "a transmission belt for wider social anxieties", with "contestations over sexuality [being] about much more than simply 'sex'" (Weeks, 1985 as cited by Hunter, 2004), a notion which seems to accurately reflect the constructions of sexuality within the data. In such a way, other social issues may be reflected in the meaning given to women's sexual behaviour, and the repression of women's sexuality through discourses which construct women as less valuable and moral once they have had sex or had sex with multiple partners may be seen as a part of a larger framework of restriction of women's freedom.

This brings us to the notion of how patriarchal gender relations were seen as influencing men and women's power in heterosexual and were therefore constructed as being related to rape in South Africa.

**Patriarchy and heterosexual: "You're the man, you get whatever you want".** In line with the feminist argument that rape is a reflection of gendered power relations (Brownmiller, 1975), men's power over women was argued by participants to be an important factor influencing male-on-female rape in South Africa. Within several discussions, entitlement was constructed as being an important factor contributing to men's raping behaviour, a notion which has also been reflected in other research (Baaz & Stern, 2009; Hill & Fischer, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2005; Jewkes et al., 2011; Truman et al., 1996). This entitlement is constructed as being related to patriarchal values, which is also constructed as being an integral part of South African/African/black culture. In such a way cultural values are constructed as playing

a fundamental role in structuring the power relationship between men and women in South Africa, including in the sexual realm. The following extracts clearly demonstrate this construction:

**Extract 13**

Researcher: [...] *Why* do you think, um... certain men, are raping, girls and women in South Africa?

O: I think for one it's a... sense of entitlement. Because, a lot of our cultures in which we grow up in as black people I mean... I mean black people are very cultural. I mean, it's *rare* to be black, and say you don't have like... tradition or culture. And a lot of our cultures are very... how can I say, 'patriarchal'? Like it's *men* and it's *women*.

A: Mm hm.

O: So we have this, sense of, 'no that's *mine if*, if I *want* it I'll *take* it' [A: Ja][E: It's true]. So, from a young age we grew up that sense that, 'no I'm better than a girl, so if I want sex' - and it kind of, manifests into that that if you want sex, you can get sex, a girl, cannot tell you that 'no no'. So I think it's one of those things that we have this sense of entitlement, to sex. Whether forceful or not or... whether the girl, gives us consent or not. I think it's one of those things.

D: So like the woman is there to... to *give* you sex.

O: Ja. (Group 4)

**Extract 14**

N: I also think like I know the same guys like I think it's to do with um... spe- okay specifically in South African history, I know it's similar to what, to what the whole world went through but, if if if you like at our past we've had, we've had, among the black community right we've had um... polygamy, basically, being practised in the past when a male... It was actually... allowed and permissible for a normal for a man to have more than one wives and stuff like that right, so, since then and and uh um, our history shows that like... men... and it's the case from all over around the world that men are superior to women it's always been like that that's why this whole, this whole equity thing going around but since South Africa is still a bit... behind the world since we just had our democracy... recently and stuff like that, and

so... and so in a way, in a way, *men*... like *some* men, relatively let's say less educated, or... ja, still *see* themselves, superior to women, still *see* women as... as sexual objects and belonging in the kitchen and stuff like that and so... that they don't, they don't *value* them, they don't, *think*, their opinions should matter and the fact that, most women don't act like men, go to work and provide they feel like... *since* they do all of that they have, they have the right and, and and, ja they have the right, to... to to have whatever they want from a woman so... I feel like that's one, that's one of the factors that, that that that um... that causes, that causes uh uh people to... like men to to, to rape women 'cause they feel like, they're superior to them, so... they can have whatever they want do whatever they want... with them.

Within each of these descriptions patriarchy is constructed as being related to rape and is also constructed as an integral part of black South African culture. Similarly, in Group 1, V argued that in certain cultures in South Africa men are 'trained' to say "*Uyindoda*, like, 'you're a man' – 'you're the man, you get whatever you want'". Black people are also depicted (here and elsewhere) as being strongly connected to culture ("black people are very cultural" (O, Extract 13)). Additionally, in Extract 14, N relates practices such as polygamy to the fact that, in terms of gender equality, South Africa is "still a bit behind the world", and that men's feeling of superiority to women is one of the factors that "causes [them] to rape women". Women's lack of economic empowerment ("the fact that, most women don't act like men, go to work and provide") is also demonstrated as being a factor that leads men to feeling superior to women and thus entitled to their bodies (although within this extract it is unclear whether N attributes women's lack of empowerment to structural inequality or to women's lack of effort).

These arguments seem to in part reflect the feminist argument that male-on-female rape is a result of male power, and can be seen as critiques of patriarchy. However, the fact that patriarchy is constructed as being so deeply embedded within culture may also have different meanings depending on the meaning attributed to culture, and therefore may instead be a way of excusing rape or representing it as unchangeable. Culture was further brought up regarding the issue of gift-giving and transactional heterosex, and the following two sections thus examine this issue in more depth.

**Transactional heterosex or rape: "There's no such thing as a free lunch".** Another important construction of heterosex which arose from the data was the notion of heterosex as a transactional contract, in which after receiving gifts from a man a woman is obligated to



have sex. This is in some ways similar to the victim-blaming arguments mentioned earlier in the analysis (e.g. regarding women's clothing and drinking), as women are seen as being responsible for their own rapes if they accept gifts from men with whom they do not want to have sex. Alternatively, however, being forced to have sex with someone that they have accepted gifts from was not constructed as being rape. The construction of sex as transactional was in turn argued to be a cultural practice, and the laws making forced sex after such 'transactions' illegal were argued to be inappropriate for black South Africans.

This notion of heterosex as having a transactional element has been found by several researchers in South Africa (e.g. Dunkle et al., 2007; Hunter, 2002; Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004; Wojcicki, 2002). This transactional nature of heterosex is coherent given the way sex is depicted as being experienced by men and women within the data, since if sex is seen as being negative for a woman and positive for a man it follows that a woman could expect something in return for 'giving' it to a man. Despite their similarities, it has been found that communities do not consider transactional sex the same as prostitution (Hunter, 2002; Wojcicki, 2002). Contrary to popular perception (and how it is represented in the data), Dunkle and colleagues (2007) found in their study of young men enrolling in the Stepping Stones HIV prevention trial in the Eastern Cape that the direction of the transaction was roughly balanced between men and women. These researchers also found, however, that men's participation in transactional sex of either variety was strongly correlated with intimate partner violence and the rape of women other than their main partners. This led the researchers to argue that transactional sex "can be viewed within a broader continuum of men's exercise of gendered power and control" (ibid, p. 1235). Wojcicki (2002) furthermore found that within taverns in two areas in South Africa, "there is an expectation that if a man buys a woman a beer, he is entitled to have sex with her that evening" (p. 275).

Similar arguments arose with the current data. In the following extract, the group were discussing the issue of women's drinking, which led the group to the issue of gift-giving:

***Extract 15***

Researcher: So, what would you say then, in a situation where... We've been talking about, *alcohol* there, where, for instance, um someone is *buying* a girl, buying her drinks, strong drinks, throughout the evening, in order to, have sex with her.

G: Well, I think, sometimes... Like, the *girls know* what they're in for. So, um... Like, I have sisters, and, my mother is always telling them, 'there's no such thing as a free lunch', if, a guy is buying you, lots of nice clothes, lots of things, he wants to sleep

with you [K: Ja]. So, as a girl, if... Let's say I'm a girl, and I'm *accepting* from the um... expensive gifts, from this guy. I essentially know what's coming next, and... in terms of that culture, then... you you *knew* what was coming and what was expected of you. And for you then... You can't say 'oh, he convinced me to sleep with him' and then call that rape. You saw it coming. And you'd find that like, in... in that *instance*, if a girl doesn't want to have sex with you, she doesn't even *accept* your gifts... and... she makes it very clear. So, I think part of the problem is... there's one... type of person making the law, and... the *majority*... are from, a different different culture, which looks at things differently, and the *law* is so ridiculous to them that they're like 'okay you know what *screw* the law' because it's just ridiculous. (Group 3)

Within this extract, girls are depicted as knowing "what's coming next" if they accept gifts from a man, in terms of a part of an accepted social practice, and G argues that if a girl does not want to have sex with a man then she "doesn't even accept [his] gifts". Therefore, inherent in this argument is that if a girl accepts gifts from a man, she is knowingly entering into a transaction in which having sex will be required of her. This in line with Kaufman and Stavrou's (2004) findings that "gift giving in like-age relationships may also be associated with sexual leverage, an exchange which somehow entitles one partner physical and sexual rights to the other's body" (p. 377). In this extract, G also argues that rape laws are incongruent with South African culture (discussed later), constructing transactional sex as a cultural practice.

The construction of heterosex was also used to depict rape accusations of wealthy or powerful men as being likely to be false, such as is demonstrated in the following extract:

***Extract 16a***

G: [...] Okay, most of the rape cases that I know of... um... You – It's not let's say maybe, you work at a good company, and you sleep with your colleague when she's drunk, and she decides to sue you. The bulk of the cases, that you find in terms of rape are... this very, high up guy... like let's say a minister or a big businessman... um, sleeps with this girl from the township, and then... *she* decides, she wants a lawsuit, because... um... according to some definition, he raped her. So why is it *only*, in such um-

H: It's *not*, it's not *only* in such instances and you have to think of it in terms of the glass is half empty and half full, because, *yes* there's an avenue for women to exploit, men and and... get some sort of... legal... type of, verdict against a man, but a man can also exploit his authority in the same way that a woman can so... it's... it's on *that* that's kind of... it's... that's the *pivot* almost that we want to *define* what rape is 'cause... it's... it's *true* what you're saying that many women have... can... or have *wrongly* said that they were raped to get some sort of something out of it, especially like um, instances of high executives but, then... like something controversial is Jacob Zuma, and um... Having had raped, someone, having been alleged to have raped someone but... *within* that platform there's also an avenue that, it's *possible*, that he *could* have had raped someone or it's *possible* that she lied but... the thing is... currently like, *inherently* men are favoured still... to a certain degree more than women.

G: But what I'm saying is... you are *also* failing to acknowledge that, these laws are le – leaving, men, exposed to, um... [S: Exploitation][K: Mm] ja, exploitation, and it's, it's *very* easy, for a man to get exploited, because I think... that is leaning more towards prostitution, and *not* rape. Because, okay... if let's say, most... And I think that this happens even in the States, like most, um... big businessman, if you want a girl, what are you gonna do? You are gonna express your love by buying, expensive, gifts, and stuff and... girls *know* this, and... you don't have to be from a specific culture or specific background, if... I buy, a girl something, if I *keep* buying her expensive gifts, she *knows*... like... um... I'm either after a relationship and... it's going to get to that point where... um... where I sleep with her, so-

H: I don't think she would know *anything* [...] Because some people readily accept stuff like, sometimes if you go out and, you're buying a girl drinks, there're a lot of girls that would just accept the drink and they're not bothered with you it's like you're giving them something it's no different from getting something for free so for them it doesn't mean something and that's like, that's the addition of female consciousness like... they're *empowered* now so you can *give* them something and they can *accept* it, and that's that so... It's... the assumption that, thinking that, in *giving* something to someone they have to *give* you something in return, it's their way of a definition of rape and of the occurrence of rape. (Group 3)

Within this extract the primary issues at play are 1) whether rape accusations against wealthy/powerful men are likely to be false, 2) whether girls are aware/agree that they will be required to have sex with a man if they accept gifts from him, and 3) whether South African law disadvantages (black) men.

G states that “the bulk of the cases” of rape accusations involve a man who is “high up” and a “girl from the township”, therefore constructing wealthy or powerful men as being particularly vulnerable to accusations of rape by women who wish to use the law (derisively referred to as “according to some definition”<sup>27</sup>) to their advantage to exploit such men. This once again depicts women as easily making false rape accusations, and H concedes that “many women have [...] *wrongly* said that they were raped to get some sort of something out of it” (with “something” presumably referring to a financial settlement). This construction implies that when a woman accuses a wealthy or powerful man of rape she is likely to be lying, a construction which might thereby serve to undermine the perception of a rape victim’s credibility if her situation is in line with this scenario. H mentions the Jacob Zuma rape trial, and this construction of women as likely to make false accusations against powerful men was demonstrated in this trial by the aggressive actions of Zuma supporters towards the complainant and her supporters, which “created a sense that it is illegitimate to lay a charge of rape, at least against a powerful individual” (Suttner, 2009, p. 228).

The second issue within this extract relates to the notion that girls are aware of the rules of transactional heterosex (argued by G). By accepting gifts/money from a man, a woman is seen as entering into an informal contract that will require her to have sex. Within this context girls’ knowledge of the rules of the transactional contract positions them as either blameworthy for their rapes or as not being raped at all if forced sex occurs. Simply based on the dynamics involved, G argues that in the situation where a wealthy and/or powerful man is accused of rape, “that is leaning more towards prostitution, and *not* rape”. This indicates that if a woman has sex (consensual or not) with a man who is wealthy, she is presumed to have been a recipient of that wealth, and her accusation of rape is seen as being invalidated by the

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<sup>27</sup> This refers to the fact G sees it as being written by “the white man” or “the minority culture”, as he mentions elsewhere.

fact that she is assumed to have received ‘compensation’ for the sex. Thus not only is the woman depicted as making a false accusation, but labelling her experience ‘rape’ is not depicted as an option in such a scenario. By conflating prostitution with a situation whereby a woman is forced to have sex after receiving gifts from a man, G’s argument renders both prostitutes and other women as ‘unrapeable’ if they have been ‘compensated’ for the sex. G’s argument is in line with Wojcicki’s (2002) findings regarding ‘survival sex’ in taverns in certain communities in South Africa, where:

If a woman accepts a beer or other gifts from a man in a tavern, then it is understood that she has consented to a sexual relationship. If she then unsuccessfully resists a sexual relationship after accepting beers, it is not considered rape [...] because it is understood that she consented to sex by accepting drinks. (p. 275)

Within such a construction of the rules pertaining to transactional heterosex, a woman is thereby constructed as not having the right to refuse sex if she has accepted gifts from a man.

H alternatively draws on a feminist discourse and argues that because of “female consciousness” women are “empowered”, and they are therefore able to accept gifts without giving “something in return” (i.e. sex). H thus positions G’s argument as being incongruent with women’s empowerment, and by saying “they’re *empowered* now” he also implicitly distinguishes “now” from the past, indicating that given women’s changed status G’s argument no longer holds. In such a way, H positions G’s argument as outdated and his own as progressive, a point he later reinforces by implying that one would agree with him “if you think liberally” about the situation.

G however rejects this liberal/outdated binary, instead constructing the issue as being a racial one, as is demonstrated in the following extract:

***Extract 16b***

G: But um... I think that, that also comes to a point where... you can already see that the person making the law, is seeing something different to you... I thi- I think most guys would agree – For a *black* girl, if you haven’t bought her something, I mean... You’re not like... you haven’t really... Not to say the gift *proves* your love but I mean, she would like ‘how can you say you love me when you’ve never even *bought* me anything or...’

Q (to H): Okay you buy, a girl expensive gifts, and then walk away?

F: Never.

[Much chatter and laughing]

H: Firstly like – Like also it depends on the type of girl because obviously the type of girl-

K: Okay any type of girl, would *you do it*?

H: Buy her an expensive something-

K: And then walk away?

H: I *can* if I have the... Because you see, I have the faculties and the wherewithal to do that<sup>28</sup>, so it's different for me so it's...

K: Maybe you are too rich man, to do that, but, because like me I won't like – only my girlfriend. Even a friend [H: Yeah but I know like-] I won't [...] I *can't* buy something that is like, a phone maybe something that is [Q: Less expensive] you see, I can *only* buy her something that she can eat and it's over, I can't see this 'eish, you see this thing reminds me of what what, you see.

H: But like, you see like, what I'm struggling now to understand is like, are we *just* defining rape in terms of buying things or are we saying... are we saying that, that like, that you give a girl incentive or a gesture of what your intentions are are we saying that if you buy someone something that it justifies rape.

F: No all we're saying is, buying someone something is one of the factors, which lead to rape.

K: Sometimes.

H: Okay.

G: And I'm saying well that defence, in understanding, of, um... the culture... Because the person making the law, sees it, as sensible, but you can already see that from... this discussion already, 'cause let's say you are making the law, and we are supposed to follow it, even within this, this context... by the time you make the law,

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<sup>28</sup> This point can also be seen as a rejection of accounts of rape which draw on the DMSD.

most of us are already like ‘okay you know what, we don’t even *care* about this guy’s law’, because, it’s just so ridiculous.

F: Also like you are trying to enforce modern laws on... us [Q: *Indigenous* people] they are, we... we’re not at the same stage as... whatever people who are applying laws and you are trying to enforce those laws on us. (Group 3)

By referring to “black girls” and then later to “culture”, G changes the course of the discussion by representing the arguments as being different because H is from a different culture to the other group members (H is the only non-black group member, self-defined as ‘Coloured’). Black people are represented by G as being made to follow laws which are incongruent with their culture, made by the “minority culture” or “the white man” (G, earlier in the discussion). Earlier G argued that rape laws should rather be made by someone who understands black people, “like let’s say Jacob Zuma”, and he also suggested that a possible reason why rape is so high in South Africa is that black men are rebelling against laws made by the “minority culture” by raping women. F also states that “you are trying to enforce modern laws on... us”, yet “we’re not at the same stage as... whatever people who are applying laws”<sup>29</sup>, implying that black people are less modern or behind white people and thus should be held to different standards. The issue of culture was thus highly politicised in this discussion, with the laws made by “the white man” seen as being inappropriately enforced onto black men, disadvantaging them and leaving them exposed to exploitation by women. Alternatively, K depicts the issue as potentially being related to money, saying “maybe you are too rich man”. In such ways, the group therefore reframes the issue so that H’s arguments about women’s empowerment are depicted as irrelevant. This is similar to how a cultural discourse was used by males in Archer’s (2001) study, in which “feminist ideas (and ‘western culture’) are resisted through discourses of culture and particular gender relations are reified as ‘natural’ and unchangeable because of culture and ‘tradition’” (p. 97). Through drawing on

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<sup>29</sup> This demonstrates the construction of black people as less advanced than white people, discussed in the following section.

cultural and socioeconomic explanations for the rules of transactional heterosex, the issue of women's rights is effectively silenced.

The way in which heterosex has been constructed as transactional within this data is therefore clearly problematic. It can be seen as contributing to the 'grey area' between what is considered rape and what is considered consensual sex, as within the script of transactional sex women are regarded as implicitly consenting to sex when they accept gifts from men, leaving little to no room for women to refuse to have sex if they have accepted a gift. Although neither G nor F explicitly describe what the 'culturally appropriate' law would look like in this situation, from the rest of the statements made in the discussion it is implied that such a law would not consider it rape if a woman is forced to have sex with a man she has previously accepted any gifts from. From both a feminist and human rights' perspective, such an allowance would clearly be highly problematic.

The issue of the construction of heterosex as transactional therefore opens up the broader issue about the role of culture in interpreting practices and roles within the context of heterosex, and within male-female relations in general. In the following section, I will further examine the issue of a cultural discourse competing with a discourse of women's rights (further demonstrated in Appendix G), which was highlighted in this discussion on transactional heterosex.

**Culture and heterosex: "The *law*'s definition of rape... [...] most black people, consider it normal".** Within the discussion G argued that South Africa's rape laws are incongruent with the culture of black South Africans, stating that, "the *law*'s definition of rape... [...] most black people, consider it normal" (Group 3, Appendix G). The practice of drawing upon culture as an argument for conduct surrounding heterosex is pertinent considering that culture was argued to be an important factor influencing sexual violence within several of the discussion groups. At times, elements constructed as part of (black/African) culture were criticised for being potentially linked to rape, for example: men's sense of (sexual and other) entitlement (Groups 1 and 4); polygamy and sexism (Group 2); and the practice of a girl being provided for sex for a male that comes back from initiation in Xhosa and Ndebele traditions (Group 4). However, even these criticisms take on a different tone if utilised within a framework of culture as a fixed entity, as in such a context practices are constructed as largely unchangeable. A demonstration of a possible effect of representing culture as inflexible is the fact that G's appeal to cultural difference brought the discussion to an end – a complicated debate was simplified and opposing views muzzled through constructing the issue as simply a matter of cultural difference. Drawing upon



cultural discourses in this context can thus be problematic in several ways, including that it misrepresents culture as rigid/static; often supports patriarchal, heterosexist ideology as well as feeding into a racist discourse about black men; and lays the foundation for the argument that gender equality is incongruent with black/African culture. Furthermore, it depicts black people as overly constrained by culture (whilst simultaneously making practices within 'Western' culture invisible and thus beyond criticism), and deemphasises individual rights and responsibilities. (Appendix G is an extract which further demonstrated some of the issues regarding this discussion in Group 3, in which several of these criticisms of the cultural argument are brought up by H). G argued that president Zuma should write the laws on rape in South Africa in order for them to be culturally relevant, which is particularly pertinent in that the Zuma rape trial was the impetus for sparking a similar debate (regarding the relationship between cultural and sexual rights) to that found within the discussion on transactional heterosex. In this section I will therefore discuss the issue of culture with particular reference to some of the issues raised by commentators on the Zuma rape trial.

It has been argued that cultures are often misrepresented as static and rigid, when in reality they are dynamic entities (e.g. Frenkel, 2008; Rankhota, 2004; Ratele, 2007, 2013). This representation holds particular utility in feeding into patriarchal and heterosexist ideologies, as practices and inequalities are legitimised by being constructed as a part of a fixed culture. In the trial Zuma constructed his behaviour as part of traditional Zulu heterosexual practice, and the discourses surrounding the trial "reflected profound tensions between constructions of 'traditional' African masculinity and a rights-based discourse on sexual rights and gender inequality" (Robins, 2006, p. 179) – a similar 'tradition vs. rights' binary to that found within the current data.

These frameworks serve different interests for different groups, and from a feminist perspective the traditionalist discourse has been argued to be potentially problematic for efforts towards gender and sexual equality (e.g. see Frenkel, 2008; Maitse, 2000; Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012; Rankhota, 2004; Ratele, 2013; Robins, 2006, Shefer & Potgieter, 2006; Suttner, 2009). Shefer and Potgieter (2006) argue that culture "may be used as a way of excusing problematic male behaviour and male power in sexual relationships" (p. 115); Shefer and Foster (2001) note that in the South African context a cultural discourse is often used to "rationalize and defend gender power inequalities" (p. 385); and Ratele (2007) argues that it is problematic when culture is perceived as "rigidly married to a timeless tradition", as in such a form it is "accepted as a state of group life that is antagonistic to transformation" (p. 71). Similarly, with reference to the Zuma trial, Frenkel (2008) argues

that, “The insertion of cultural difference as a mode of defence in the mistreatment of women hinges on the ideas of traditions being ahistorical, immutable and misogynistic” (p. 4).

An important issue is of who *defines* what culture is: In the case of the Zuma trial, the defendant’s definition of Zulu culture was taken-for-granted by the judge and by many in the media (Robins, 2006) (although it was also “derided” by some commentators (Vetten, 2007, p. 438)). This issue of who defines culture is significant in that a discourse of culture may be used to perpetuate patriarchal, heterosexist ideals in service of the power of those promulgating them and in opposition to women’s rights and gender equality (Rankhotha, 2004). As H comments, “it’s what’s been *accepted* culturally but that’s because *men* have been defining what culture and society is as patriarchs” (Appendix G). Ratele (2013) further argues that “Resorting to arguments about tradition appears to follow moments when dominant voices within the group feel exposed” (p. 15); this appears to have been the case within the Zuma trial and can also be seen as pertaining to sexual violence in South Africa in general, wherein (in particular black) men are exposed to criticism and may benefit from utilising a cultural discourse. However, although such a cultural discourse may serve to legitimise coercive sexual relations within a certain ‘culture’, Frenkel (2008) argues that ultimately it feeds into racist stereotypes of black males as “oversexed and culturally conservative” (p. 5).

Sewpaul (2007) notes that in certain societies, “Perhaps as a reactionary measure, tradition gets to be upheld as the core of an authentic indigenous culture, an emancipatory alternative to a hegemonic Western culture” (p. 404). This relates to the fact that within the data culture is conflated with race as well as highly politicised (as black versus white). This is problematic in that, in a similar way to how masculinity’s construction in opposition to femininity constrains men from behaving in ways considered feminine (Herek, 1987), constructing blackness as oppositional to whiteness may operate to discourage black people from either behaving in ways or supporting ideas considered ‘white’. This is particularly relevant within the context of what has been referred to as the ‘African Renaissance’, which “broadly refers to the philosophy of reawakening and developing all that is essentially African” (Rankhotha, 2004, p. 85), a notion which gives currency to arguments drawing upon culture. Ratele (2013) argues that certain variations of this type of argument can be problematic, in that: “This return to the past [encouraged by hetero-patriarchal traditionalists] works towards suppressing any progressive, disruptive forces [which] are usually viewed as ‘modern’, foreign, or ‘Westernised’” (p. 16). Amongst other things, for some this appears to be the case regarding women’s empowerment and feminism, of which the latter has been

argued to be “a Western, white philosophy that [is] irrelevant to African conditions” (Qunta, 1987 as cited by Morrell & Swart, 2005, p. 99). This is similar to how the “white man’s” laws on rape (which are arguably designed to protect women’s rights) are constructed within the data.

Tellingly, ‘Western’ cultural practices which *support* women’s oppression instead of challenging it do not seem to be branded in the same way. A fitting example relates to the WCAR, which had a significance presence in the Zuma trial and also within the data. Vetten’s (2007) point therefore can also be applied to the latter:

[W]hat many missed in their analyses of Zuma’s cultural defence was how closely aspects of it tallied with long-standing preoccupations in Roman-Dutch law with women’s dress and conduct. From the judgement it is clear that in deciding whether or not [the complainant] had consented, the judge also took into account her clothing and conduct on the night in question. In other words, Zuma’s explanation of why he assumed consent drew less on uniquely Zulu cultural norms than on shared cross-cultural masculine norms. (p. 439)

This contradiction was demonstrated earlier in CC’s discussion on why historically women in certain groups in South Africa used to be “topless”, and yet they were not raped. Although this could easily be constructed as a part of ‘culture’ which should therefore be supported, one does not hear the argument that ‘women should be able to be topless because it is a part of culture’. The WCAR alternatively seems to have thrived in the South Africa context with no acknowledgement of this inconsistency.

Furthermore, the constructions of black people’s relationship to culture in this discussion is also somewhat problematic in that it constructs black people as being almost entirely constricted by culture and not able to act or reason independently of the rules of the cultural group of which they are a part. Given that white people are not viewed as being as “cultural” as black people, they are therefore not constructed as being similarly constrained, reasoning which could potentially feed into a racist discourse. Tellingly, this construction was demonstrated in the Population Registration Act of 1950, in which, “it seems to suggest that Afrikaners and English-speakers do not have ethnic roots: they are just white” (Ratele, 2007, p. 68). A possibly problematic effect of this construction can be seen within the data through the ways in which white or ‘Western’ people are often constructed as being more advanced than black or ‘African’ people, which is likely to be related to the fact that culture is generally

seen as being related to the past. Furthermore, 'Western' values and practices are constructed as 'acultural', therefore depicting them as more advanced and progressive, and a double standard is created in which there is little space to criticise elements of 'Western' culture<sup>30</sup>. Although G does refer to the "minority culture", this is only in order to compare it to African culture and, unlike 'black' or 'African' culture, at no stage are any elements of 'white' or 'Western' cultures referred to in relation to why men rape. Relating a rigid construction of African culture to rape further constructs black men as being likely to rape as well as white men as unlikely to rape. Paradoxically, this could potentially be problematic for the subjectivities of individual men within both of these groups, as sexually violent behaviour amongst black men is normalised and legitimised, whereas sexually violent behaviour amongst white men may be rendered invisible (to themselves and to others).

Ratele (2007) argues that "cultures that fail to acknowledge their own imperfections and limits are harmful to their members and jeopardise their proclaimed benefits" (ibid, p. 68), a point that can be seen as being particularly relevant to the issue of gendered power relations in many different cultures (including 'Western' ones), and is also applicable to the cultural prescriptions described within the data. The reason why cultural relativism (i.e. the argument that something is right for members of a culture if it is seen as right within that culture) is unfeasible as an ethical argument is that from within such a framework any practice, no matter how indefensible on humanitarian or other grounds, can be made to be 'right' and excusable within a given context. This extends to the issue of sexual violence, as by using a cultural discourse as a resource to justify men's sexually aggressive behaviour, the rights and interests of the individuals who are raped are overlooked (Scully, 2009). Furthermore, the culpability and responsibility is largely removed from a perpetrator of such sexual aggression, as he is constructed as simply conforming to an acceptable social practice. Therefore, although examining those practices and beliefs that are constructed as being related to culture is undoubtedly important, drawing on a discourse of culture to rationalise sexual violence whilst simultaneously constructing culture as rigid is problematic in that it

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<sup>30</sup> A good example of this is the contrary constructions by 'Westerners' of 'female genital mutilation' and 'female genital cosmetic surgery' (cf. Braun, 2009).

deemphasises the importance of individual rights (of the victims) as well as responsibilities (of the perpetrators).

In this section I have argued that the constructions relating heterosex to culture utilised within the data (of culture being related to rape, of rape laws being inappropriate for black South Africans, of 'African' culture as behind 'Western' culture) are potentially problematic, in particular depending on how the entity of culture itself is constructed. In the Zuma rape trial, Zuma drew on constructions of 'traditional' Zulu masculine and feminine sexual etiquette in order to depict as 'just sex' an interaction which the complainant viewed as rape – this demonstrates how "Behaviour categorized as 'rape' by a rape victim may [...] be rendered 'acceptable' by re-defining it as within the boundaries of normative heterosexual gender relations and behaviour" (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 21). His explanation, which was accepted by both the judge as well as many other South Africans, demonstrates the perceived legitimacy (by some) of using a cultural discourse to explain sexual behaviour in South Africa, as is reflected in the current data. This is problematic considering the number of issues with cultural discourses (several of which were highlighted by H, Group 3): They can support patriarchal and heterosexist ideology and be anathema to women's rights and gender equality; they can feed into racist discourses about black men (and people) whilst making invisible the sexual violence of white men; and they can deemphasise the rights and responsibilities of individuals. This section therefore aimed to highlight the potential problems in using a discourse of culture to explain masculine and feminine roles in heterosex.

**The media and pornography: "Woman - *that's* your object, this is your *toy* like go *play* with it".** On a different note, within groups 1 and 5 the media (including pornography) was argued to potentially contribute to sexual violence due to the way in which it represents male and female sexuality. Television was also very briefly mentioned in Group 6 as giving a "distorted, way of viewing things" (BB). Factors which were argued by participants to be problematic were the media's sexual objectification of women; its emphasis on sex; its portrayal of men as dominant; and its encouragement of women to wear less clothing (which was related to the WCAR). Pornography was presented as being a particularly problematic medium for depictions of heterosex, and issues brought up were that it objectifies women; that males are depicted as aggressive and domineering, lacking emotion and solely focused on the physical; and that sex is depicted as being about what the male wants (Group 3). One participant stated that porn sends the message to males that "woman - *that's* your object, this is your *toy* like go *play* with it" (DD, Group 5).

Amongst these ideas the media is argued to be potentially related to rape in three ways: through the stimulation of the male sexual drive; through influencing women to wear less clothing; and indirectly through the representation of women as sexual objects. These present the role of the media as having different paths, with the former two being based on the DMSD, whereas the latter alternatively depicts male sexuality and gender relations as being potentially influenced by social forces. The notion of sexuality and sexual practices as *malleable* to the influences of the media is contrary to some of the other constructions previously mentioned, whereby sexuality was presented as being *fixed* either due to essential differences between men and women's experiences of heterosex or due to reified cultural sexual norms. It also arguably depicts a more favourable image of men, who are not depicted as inherently 'rapacious' but rather as developing sexually aggressive behaviour through their sexual socialisation by the media and/or pornography<sup>31</sup>.

This approach can be seen as preferable in that it acknowledges the social influences of males' sexual behaviour, reflecting the findings of the empirical research (e.g. on pornography) and feminist arguments of the harm of certain media representations of men and women. The notion of the media influencing sexual aggression, although less dominant in the discussion than other factors mentioned as contributing (with the exception of Group 5), can be seen as representing male and female sexuality in a more fluid way to those representations previously discussed, and can be seen as more congruent with feminist aims and also more positive about the possibilities of addressing the issue of male sexual violence.

Contrary to this construction of male and female sexuality, however, several of the discourses discussed within this and the previous sections (for example the notion of heterosex as transactional) can alternatively be viewed as constructing male and female sexuality in ways which serve patriarchal ideology and normalise and legitimate male power

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<sup>31</sup> In Group 3 however there was a significant debate about whether porn actually changes men in a significant way or can lead them to rape, which is a demonstration of Dines (2010) point about how the question "Does porn lead to rape?" is problematic in that it misses the complex ways in which such processes contribute to male sexual aggression, creating a false dichotomy (either 'yes' or 'no') which can serve to hide the subtleties of the issue and enable pornography and other contributions to rape culture to be represented as harmless.

over women. This relates to the most dominant construction of masculinity within the data, of masculinity as being equated with power, to which I now turn.

### **Masculinity as Power**

The principle defining characteristic of masculinity in the data was its relationship to power, with having power constructed as being quintessentially what makes a man a “man”. This reflects findings in the literature, both in South Africa and elsewhere, that power/dominance is an important element of masculinity in many contexts (e.g. Cooper & Foster, 2008; Hood, 1995; Kaufman, 1994, 1998; Kimmel, 1993, 1994; Mahalik et al., 2003; O’Neill, 1981; Sideris, 2004; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Within the data, men who are disempowered in various ways were depicted as raping women in attempt at gaining power and therefore recovering some of their lost masculinity. This reflects the notion of rape as being a result of “the degradation of masculine pride” (Moffett, 2006, p. 134), and relates to Bruce’s (2007) notion that when certain elements of masculinity are unattainable, men may use sex and/or violence as means of achieving masculinity.

It has been argued that “the ‘meaning’ of manhood is constructed in relation to other men and to women” (Archer, 2001, p. 83), which is congruent with the current data. Men were depicted as being potentially disempowered in relation to other men either racially through the system of apartheid or economically through poverty<sup>32</sup>. Alternatively, they were constructed as being disempowered in relation to women either by women’s empowerment in general or by individual women’s insubordinate behaviour in relation to them. In this section, I will discuss men’s disempowerment in relation to other men using Connell’s (1995) notion of ‘marginalised masculinities’, and I will relate their disempowerment in relation to women to the notion of rape as a means of gendered social control.

**Marginalised masculinities: “They don’t really feel like a man”.** In line with Bruce’s (2007) argument that men may use sex and violence to make up for their lack of masculine achievement in other spheres, men were depicted within the data as using rape to

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<sup>32</sup> It is also important to note here that in the South African context, the legacy of apartheid means that to refer to “poor” people is generally also to refer to people that are black (or at least to non-whites).

overcome their feelings of disempowerment (and thus emasculation) in other areas. The notion of masculinity as being related to power was thus clearly demonstrated, through the depiction of men who are seen as *lacking* power as trying to *gain* power through raping women. This reflects the notion discussed in the literature review of rape being a performance of masculinity to the perpetrator himself in order to overcome feelings of inferior masculinity or emasculation (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Malamuth & Thornhill, 1994; Messerschmidt, 2000). Within the data, the ways in which men were seen as being disempowered (and thus lacking masculinity) in relation to other men were primarily either through being black in the system of apartheid and/or through being poor.

The notion of men's disempowerment in relation to other men can be seen as relating to the concepts of 'hegemonic' and 'marginalised' masculinities (cf. Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These concepts are drawn from Gramsci's notion of hegemony in class relations, referring to "the exercise of power by creating consent through the establishment of accepted ideas or values" (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, p. 3). Applying this notion to gender relations, Connell (1995) defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 81). Hegemonic masculinity is both hegemonic over femininity (and thus key in the maintenance of patriarchy) and over other masculinities. Following this distinction, Demetriou (2001) refers to hegemonic masculinity's "hegemony over women" as "external hegemony", and its "hegemony over subordinate masculinities" as "internal hegemony" (p. 341). The concepts of subordinate and marginalised masculinities are integral to internal hegemony, whereby, "subordination refers to relations internal to the gender order [and] marginalization describes the relationships between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups" (Demetriou, 2001, p. 342). Thus the concept of subordination relates to the notion of heterosexual masculinity being hegemonic over homosexual masculinity (relating to homophobia and the 'heterosexual imperative', discussed earlier), whereas marginalisation can alternatively be seen as relating to the different levels of masculinity afforded to one based on race and class.

In the data, the constructions relating to what makes men feel (un)masculine implicitly structure a marginalised/hegemonic hierarchy between different groups. Namely, black men are constructed as being disempowered in relation to the hegemony of white men during apartheid and poor men are constructed as being disempowered as a result of their



socioeconomic standing. The following extract demonstrates the notion of black men's marginalised masculinities in relation to white men during apartheid as being an explanation for rape in South Africa:

**Extract 17**

Y: I think, this issue goes back to, historically, the history of South Africa. Like uh... like back to the apartheid, uh... period. Like *men*, they were, degraded, like, uh by the... apartheid uh government and things, so like, right now I think that they tried to redeem, it was a way of redeeming themselves so uh... reaffirming their man-manship, like they embark on like raping people like, it wasn't a thing that was inborn in them but it was a way of... getting their ego back. So like I think, that might be, another adding factor like the way they were treated like before, like influenced their behaviour towards women, 'cause like they *saw* women there as being... They like, they were *seen* as, as being *lower* to the, to the apartheid people, but, so they had to, reaffirm, their *power*, when they got home, so they had to... do it through like, sexual violence, I think (Group 2)

The fact that one 'reaffirms' one's 'manship' through asserting one's power demonstrates the masculinity/power linkage. In this account, contrary to the DMSD account of rape, Y argues that rape is *not* an inborn characteristic, but is alternatively something caused by the degradation of (presumably) black men by the apartheid government. Rape is constructed as a means of men "redeeming themselves", making up for power lost through racial oppression by using sexual violence "when they got home".

Similarly, Simpson (1991 as cited in Wojcicki, 2002) argued that during the 1980s in apartheid gang rape became for certain young black South African males "a means of increasing self-esteem [in which] women became the targets of displaced aggression" (p. 270). Maitse (2000) comments on the argument that apartheid explains black men's violence against black women, noting:

[...] if we want to use apartheid as an explanation for African men's violence towards African women we have to question why this violence was unleashed only on women rather than on the men who were the oppressors. Is it because, historically, the oppression of race has often been seen as the oppression of men? (pp. 207-208)

The explanations for rape within Extract 17 (and elsewhere in the data) seem to be in accordance with this notion of racial oppression being perceived as the oppression of men – the power taken away from black *men* by apartheid is emphasised, whilst black women's lack of power is rather seen as relating to gender. This difference further demonstrates the implicitness of masculinity's relationship to power, since (unlike for women) men's loss of power through racial oppression is emphasised and is seen as provoking them to violence. This also constructs black men as being more likely to be rapists, a notion which on multiple occasions was explicitly voiced by participants.

In a similar way to how black men's reaction to racial oppression was constructed as relating to rape, men who are "poorer" are also constructed as raping as a result of their marginalised masculinities due to socioeconomic disempowerment. Accordingly, masculinity is often constructed as being related to wealth (e.g. Baaz & Stern, 2009; Bruce, 2007; O'Neill, 1981) and success (e.g. Brannon, 1976; Cooper & Foster, 2008; Luyt & Foster, 2001; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neill, 1981; Willot & Griffin, 1997). The 'wealth' element of masculinity constructions will clearly elude men within the context of poverty, as well as the 'success' element in many cases. As discussed earlier, Bruce (2007) argued that men may use alternative methods of gaining masculinity when wealth and success elements are not available, for instance by using sex and violence. This relates to Baaz and Stern's (2009) argument that in the context of poverty raping serves as "a performative act that functions to reconstitute [one's] masculinity" (p. 514).

Such arguments are reflected in the following extract:

**Extract 18**

D: *Man* – It's it's... You know I always think... especially like, for *men*, in, in maybe South African society and that, especially –I'm gonna say the word- like *poorer* men they kinda feel, like almost, I don't know what the the word is, *disempowered* you know they have very little... *opportunities* maybe and they don't really feel like a *man* kind of thing, and... um... And that, that *thing* that they ac- as *you* were saying that you can actually *take* something from *somebody*-

E: Mm.

D: You know they can take something that's of *value*, to *somebody*, for 'cause they *themselves*... Maybe they think they don't have any value or *something*.

E: Ja...

D: You know? And they can *take* that and then *they* think, strangely enough... that they the... the 'O', they the, sorry the - for lack of a better word - they the *shit*.

[Some laughter from group]

E: Ja.

O: Ja.

Researcher: How do you think, it is that, raping someone, 'cause you talked about... being a *man*, right?

D: Mm hm.

Researcher: How do you think, that could make you *feel* then like you... are like... more of a *man*, and like... if that's...

D: Ja...

E: Ja like he was saying like, around you... that particular person they are always going to feel... *inferior* to you, they are always gonna feel like... Basically they'll *fear* you (pause). Kinda-

A: Mm hm.

D: Cause then you have the *power* again-

E: Ja. So like, around *them*, you at least feel like [D: Like you're the *man*] you're the shit. You're the shit [A: Mm] you can you you you can, strut your stuff like, you know, she can't *tell* you anything, 'cause you *proved* to her that, you're *above* her, somehow. So that, that *adds*... *Raping* them, kinda... is... it boo- it *boosts*, your, *sick*, ego or something.

Reflecting findings in the literature (e.g. Cooper & Foster, 2008; Hood, 1995; Kaufman, 1994, 1998; Kimmel, 1993, 1994; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neill, 1981; Sideris, 2004; Wood & Jewkes, 2001), here masculinity is explicitly related to having power. One of the responses to the question on how raping can make you feel like "more of a *man*" (researcher) was that, "then you have the *power* again" (D). Furthermore, similarly to how men were represented as experiencing heterosex (as discussed earlier), raping is constructed here as a positive activity which can make a man feel better about himself ("it *boosts*, your, *sick*, ego" (E)). This relates to arguments in other discussions within the data that rape is related to a lack of male self-esteem (see also Morrell & Swart, 2005), which here is depicted as caused by being poor and thus not feeling "like a *man*" (D).

D's reticence at using the term 'poorer' ("I'm gonna say the word- like *poorer* men") can be read as the discourse "[reflecting] on its own way of speaking" (Parker, 2002, p. 138),

and is perhaps an acknowledgement of the fact that the use of the term could be interpreted in a way that reflects negatively on the speaker. This may be an indication of the perceived ‘political incorrectness’ of inferring that poor men are more likely to rape. However, the group appears to support the logic behind this argument, in which rape is constructed as an alternative means through which “poorer” men are able to exercise power and thereby regain some of their feelings of being “a man”. The need for wealth/power is thus constructed as a specifically gendered *male* need. In this extract feeling like a “man” is also related to having someone be “inferior to you” and “fear you” (E), indicating the importance of dominance in this construction of masculinity. The rhetorical question from another discussion, “so life is about money and sex?” (S, Group 1) therefore demonstrates two of the important elements of the construction of masculinity within the data, as both are seen as being related to power.

These constructions of the rapist as primarily a poor, black man are problematic in several ways. Although such constructions were most often used by black participants, similar to how culture was constructed as related to rape, it could nonetheless feed into racist and classist discourses about the nature of black and/or poor men<sup>33</sup>. Accordingly, within the discussions on more than one occasion rape was explicitly described as being mostly amongst black people. Furthermore, constructing rape as being likely to be perpetrated by poor, black men may also serve to construct such behaviour as normal and/or acceptable for men who fall within this category, which may enable men within this category to interpret their sexually aggressive behaviour as normal and/or acceptable. Conversely, because the construction of the typical rapist in South Africa as poor and black positions men who do *not* fall into this category as being *unlikely* to rape, such men (e.g. rich/white men) may be less likely to interpret their behaviours as rape, and could also unfairly skew others’ perceptions of accusations against such men<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> This is a construction which is further supported by the construction of black/African culture/s as being “behind” more “modern” countries, as previously discussed.

<sup>34</sup> As was discussed in the analysis section on transactional heterosex, within G’s account accusations of rape against wealthy men were presumed to be false, which is possibly a reflection of the fact that this group is not seen as fitting the construction of a typical rapist in South Africa.

This section has dealt with the notion of men's marginalised masculinities potentially influencing their raping behaviour, which relates to Demetriou's (2001) concept of internal hegemony. I now turn to how rape was related to masculinity's external hegemony (i.e. hegemony over femininity) within the data.

**Rape as gendered social control: "To take off that pride I have to rape you".** Men were also seen as raping due to their disempowerment in relation to women; either in response to women's empowerment in general or to individual women's insubordination. In such a way rape was argued to be caused by women not sufficiently conforming to the relationship between men and women as it is constructed within patriarchal ideology. In comparison to constructions of rape as a reflection and extension of patriarchy, rape in these constructions was depicted as a tool used by men to actively police women's resistance to patriarchal gender relations. This notion of rape as a means of maintaining patriarchal control relates to the research discussed in the literature relating to rape as a performance of masculinity to women in general and to individual women (e.g. Beneke, 1995; Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Franklin, 2005; Jewkes et al., 2005; Kanin, 1967; Moolman, 2004; Wood, 2005).

At the broader societal level, gender equality was described as being threatening to certain men, who in turn are viewed as raping women as a means of attempting to restore a patriarchal power dynamic, such as is demonstrated in the following extract:

***Extract 19***

J: In society in *today's* society, what with, gender equality [Researcher: Mm] and all that. They might feel less...

W: Ja, like they feel less...

J: Less of a man.

W: Ja, like the whole-

J: If a woman is my boss.

W: (Laughs) You should be the man in the relationship so they're thinking 'I should be able to assert... my manliness' like, other (unclear) factors (unclear)-

J: 'Cause it's like the only way you can, anymore. You've lost it and [W: Ja] you can't replace it.

This notion of men's resistance to feminism and/or women's independence has been demonstrated in other research in South Africa (e.g. Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Ratele, 2008;

Sideris, 2004). It has also been argued that South African men's perception of an increase in women's power post-apartheid has led to feelings of insecurity about their status (Walker, 2005). Accordingly, in this extract, sexual violence is described as the "only way" men can assert their "manliness", since there is "gender equality" (J and W). Inherent in this is the assumption that men derived their manliness from gender *inequality*, i.e. from having power over women. Rape is thereby conceptualised as a response to women's empowerment, and is seen as a means through which men attempt to restore their threatened masculinity through demonstrating their power over women. This argument, also used by participants in my previous research (Everitt-Penhale, 2010), reflects Bourke's (2007) description of the argument that rape is a result of the 'crisis of masculinity' caused by women's empowerment. Critics of the idea of a 'crisis of masculinity', however, argue that it blames women for the problems faced by men, and deemphasises the political dimensions of gender issues as well as men's own actions in maintaining power (Sideris, 2004).

A similar argument made was that rape was a result of individual women acting insubordinate, as is demonstrated in the following extract:

**Extract 20**

K: [...] I'll try to, to make it simple like let me say, we belong in the same area or community you see, so... I mean maybe you are full of pride, you see. So maybe, uh... Like, me as a guy I *hate* you, you see. So, because you, you *tell* yourself and you are full of pride so for me to, to *take off* that pride I have to rape you because... you can't be, boasting around, saying you are still –I mean a *girl*, what what, d'you understand what I am trying to say? I don't know whether you *get* it but... ja.  
(Group 3)

This notion of rape being a means to humble women who are 'too proud' has been described in other research in South Africa (e.g. Everitt-Penhale, 2010; Moffet, 2006; Mokwena, 2007 as cited in Bruce, 2007; Niehaus, 2005; Scully, 2009; Wood, 2005; Wood & Jewkes, 2001), and demonstrates the construction of rape as a mechanism of gendered social control. The fact that rape in the above extract is constructed as a conscious decision rather than an out-of-control reaction to one's sexual drive supports the notion of rapists as having other intentions besides sexual gratification, and relates to Brownmiller's (1975) concept of the political nature of rape.

The emphasis on the gender of the girl in this extract (“I mean a *girl*”) demonstrates that this behaviour (“boasting around”) is not seen as being congruent with appropriate femininity, an affront which is punishable by rape. Masculinity and femininity are relational and constructed largely in contrast to one another (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Herek, 1987), and since masculinity is constructed as having power, the supplementary construction of femininity would be subservience, not the “pride” the girl in K’s description is demonstrating. This relates to the concept of ‘emphasised femininity’, the feminine counterpart of hegemonic masculinity, in which the focus is “compliance to patriarchy” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848). Accordingly, Jewkes and Morrell (2010) argue that for black African women within the South African context, “obedience and passivity [have been promoted] as hallmarks of African femininity” (p. 4).

In the above extract, the girl’s behaviour may therefore be constructed as inappropriate because it is not in accordance with her position within patriarchal relations, and as such can be interpreted as defiance of the prescribed gender order. As put by Moffett (2006): “When women visibly demonstrate a degree of autonomy or self-worth that men find unacceptable, they are perceived as sufficiently subversive and threatening as to compel men to ‘discipline’ them through sexual violence” (p. 138). The gendered nature of rape as a form of attack is therefore constructed as serving as a reminder to such women of their subordinate position relative to men, in which rape can be seen as a “tool of social control” in which men believe they are “participating in a socially approved project to keep women within certain boundaries” (ibid., p. 140). Accordingly, within K’s account the legitimacy of patriarchal relations is not questioned, which therefore depicts rape as a valid means of maintaining the social order in which men have power over women. This is similar to Wood’s (2004) findings in relation to men’s explanations for violence towards their partners, where “By far the most prominent theme was that violence against a wife or girlfriend was a *legitimate response* to being disrespected as a man” (p. 562, original emphasis).

K’s argument was not discussed by the rest of Group 3; however, during the discussion in Group 4 a similar argument was presented and thereafter challenged by some of the other group members:

#### ***Extract 21***

A: I think another factor that actually influences is is, it’s actually like the *girl’s* behaviour. Which, for some reason is still *going* back to... a *guy* proving a point, like... Let’s say you meet a str- like a guy met a stranger? And then he tried to talk

to them but... like you know like it's like, a good looking lady but you try to talk to her but... like you know she act all funny just give you attitude. And then probably like you guys are going to be (unclear) like me like let's say (unclear) or something. But then she's just being you know funny where, you just give an hour, then you just know after some time you just need to like you know, just get *down*, to a person? That sometimes, sometimes it's like I think it's [D: (Snorts)], not only because of the guy but, the very same person who is like a, rapist, they are provoked by... the girl's behaviour.

D: Um, okay, so you're not saying that it's the *girl's* fault?

A: I have, like, *both*-

D: It's just the way they interpret it.

A: How can I say like, both if, well I believe like, if... you really like don't know someone else, just be polite and if you don't want something just be polite [E: Ja] and say no.

[...]

O: [...] I think it goes back to the, thing of [E: Culture] power relations and... exercising power [A: Ja] because if you go to a girl, and she's like 'ah sorry boet', 'cause you gonna go, 'cause you're gonna interpret it as if, 'she has more power than me, she can just brush me off'-

A: Ja.

O: And now you'll have that mentality that, '*no* man, I can *go* there. And actually *take* what I want [A: Ja] and then *leave* her'... So then, people are gonna like 'ah, you're gonnatake what you want', your *raping* that girl, *showing* her that '*no* man *I am* the man'.

A: Ja.

O: 'That if I come to you... you're going to have to be *subservient* to me and... then do whatever I want', it kind of goes with, it kind of goes with... how people interpret [A: Yes] [E: Ja] because, a girl can blow you off [E: Ja]... 'Cause me I'm like 'oh okay she doesn't like me I'll just walk away' [A: Mm] but, someone else is not going to react the same way that – the girl's gonna, blow him off, and then the guy's gonna be like '*oh* now she thinks she's the... *thing* now I'm gonna go there, and get what I want' you see?

A: Ja.



O: So it kind of goes... interpreting of power relations and stuff in between people.

(Group 4)

In this extract, such as in the WCAR, the woman's actions (having "attitude") are described by A as "provoking" the man into raping her. Although A does concede that it is "both" of their faults, he also says (in omitted section) "that thing the girl gave, that attitude, is what actually made the guy to do it".

This account is thus very similar to K's in Extract 20. In this group however, the notion that a woman can be blamed for her own rape is challenged (such as was the case in discussions of the WCAR) by D ("Um, okay, so you're not saying that it's the girl's fault?"/"Surely you can't say now, it's her fault" (omitted)). O thereafter reframes this account ("I think it goes back to the, thing of [E: Culture<sup>35</sup>] power relations"), by instead attributing the rape not to the girl's actions, but rather to the power dynamics which cause the man to view the girl's actions as inappropriate. In such a way, in this extract we are presented with both the argument that women behaving inappropriately insubordinate can be blamed for their rape, and also the critical reflection on this hypothetical situation as being a demonstration of how an internalisation of patriarchal ideology could affect the actions of a man. Through illuminating the patriarchal discourse within such reasoning, the reframing of this account can thus be seen as a challenge to the construction that women are responsible for their own rape because of their insubordinate behaviour.

In each of the three extracts used in this section, the patriarchal power dynamic is demonstrated as not being observed by women, whose infringement of patriarchal rules is seen as an affront to the masculinity (i.e. power) of men, with rape constructed as a means of reinforcing this power dynamic and thus restoring masculinity to the rapists/men in general. These accounts are at times problematic (as noted in Group 4's discussion), in that they locate the cause of rape in women's behaviour/empowerment instead of problematizing patriarchal gender relations and men's attachment to having power over women. In such a way rape is

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<sup>35</sup> The fact that E mentions culture relates to how culture has been related to rape in South Africa, as previously discussed.

constructed as a means of maintaining a legitimate power structure in which men are dominant.

The notion of rape as gendered social control can be seen as relating to Brownmiller's (1975) assertion that rape is "a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear" (p. 15, original emphasis). Although the data does not necessarily construct "all" men as being part of this process, certainly rape is constructed as being a conscious instrument through which women's inferior position in relation to men is maintained, and thus a process from which all men 'benefit', at least in terms of relative power. Therefore the construction of rape as a tool for maintaining patriarchal gender relations can be seen as further illuminating the concept of power as a central feature of masculinity.

Despite most participants being overtly opposed to rape, the discourses surrounding masculinity and rape used by the male students in this study were often highly problematic, in that they enabled victim-blaming arguments; removed the responsibility of rape from the perpetrators; fed into racist/classist ideology, constructing poor/black men as being likely rapist whilst rendering the sexual violence of rich/white men invisible; legitimated practices which infringed on women's right to say no to sex; problematized women's empowerment; and supported patriarchal gender relations. At times challenges were made to some of these discourses and alternative explanations for rape were given. However, many of the discourses were deeply embedded within notions of what it means to be a man in South Africa. Since the essentialist account of gender is so dominant, such embedment gives strength to these discourses and creates barriers to challenging the accounts in which they are utilised.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study, I sought to identify and examine some of the discursive resources available to young men in South Africa in explaining men's perpetration of rape. This was done by examining the talk on rape of male students from the University of Cape Town. In particular, I wanted to examine how they constructed masculinity and male sexuality within the context of rape in South Africa, as well as the implications of these constructions. This was done in light of both quantitative research demonstrating the significance of the relationship between these two constructs as well as qualitative research which has demonstrated some of the ways in which this relationship is constructed in different contexts and situations. The analysis was further informed by research demonstrating that problematic constructions of masculinity and femininity within the context of 'normal' heterosex may also contribute to normalising male sexual aggression. The results from this study contribute to the evidence base in South Africa relating to masculinity and rape, which can be seen as demonstrating that the problematic discourses surrounding men, women and sexuality are in many ways congruent with the high levels of rape perpetrated by men against women in this country. Considering my identity as a woman, one would expect a certain level of 'political correctness' around an issue as gendered as male-on-female rape, and therefore the fact that the participants were able to give opinions that included less 'politically correct' arguments (in particular arguments which blamed the female victim) demonstrates the levels of the perceived legitimacy of such arguments by their proponents. This study also provides evidence that problematic discourses relating to gender are propagated by educated university students, contrary to the common misperception (as was often voiced in the discussions) that gender issues, including rape, are only a real problem amongst 'poor', 'uneducated' and 'rural' people.

This section addresses some of the limitations of the study, as well as the potential issues relating to research focusing on black men's sexual violence in South Africa. It also highlights some of the problematic implications of discourses relating to masculinity and rape that were found in this study.

### Limitations

There are certain limitations of qualitative research and of discourse analysis in particular. Qualitative research typically involves in-depth work with small samples, and as a result the findings may not be generalizable to a population (Willig, 2001). Therefore, the constructions discussed in the current study represent only some of the discursive resources

available to male students at UCT. Considering the student population is both large and diverse, not all discourses will be used or available to all groups within this population. Furthermore, the subjective nature of the research means that the interpretation of the data in this study is not exhaustive, as other researchers may have interpreted it in different ways and alternative elements of the data may have been emphasised (Willig, 2001).

Willig (2001) argues that one of the limitations of discourse analysis relates to the complexity of the relationship between discourse and the material world. In particular, an issue which has sparked strong disagreement amongst different discourse analysts pertains to the ways in which the material constrains discourse. Within this study I have not explored this issue, and thus the ways in which the material might serve to shape and constrain discourses surrounding masculinity and rape have not been considered. Furthermore, Willig (2001) notes that without drawing on alternative theoretical constructs (e.g. psychoanalytic theory) this type of analysis may not be able to fully account for how discourse relates to subjectivity and for individuals' emotional investments in different discourses.

### **Research on Black/White Men's Sexual Violence in South Africa**

Although the study did not aim to focus specifically on black men, based on those who volunteered to participate, 25 of the 30 participants identified themselves as 'Black' and/or 'African', and participants often referred to the issues they spoke of as particularly pertaining to black men/people. Malinga and Ratele (2012) argue that there are several problems with studies that have looked at black males, including that they often "approach young black men from a risk and deficit perspective"; that "black men are usually treated as a homogenous mass," and that "young black men are often implicitly measured against the status of privileged males, such as white males or older well employed black men" (p.2). Due to the topic of the study, the demographics of the participants who volunteered and the nature of the discussions, this study could arguably be accused of such offenses. However, the issues of race, class and employment were brought up by the participants as being important aspects of the issue, and "black people" were oftentimes referred to by participants in a homogenising way. Therefore, these factors can be seen as a reflection of the discursive resources available to participants as opposed to the explicit focus of the research. Nonetheless, by focusing on these issues this study may inadvertently serve to reinforce such notions.

Similarly, Vetten (2007) has pointed out that the focus on black men in studies of sexual violence in South Africa by much of the research continues to render sexual violence perpetrated by white men as largely invisible. It would therefore have been preferable to have

had more white participants in the sample, as addressing the issue of white South African men's sexual violence is an important issue for researchers to explore in order to remedy this bias.

Furthermore, although I have attempted to present participants' challenges to dominant discourses, within this study focus has been placed on *problematic* discourses surrounding masculinity and rape. Future research which focuses to a greater extent on how males may be challenging such discourses would thus be valuable.

### **Problematic Functions of Discourses Surrounding Masculinity and Rape**

Within the discussions, rape was generally not explicitly condoned or supported (with some exceptions), and many participants expressed their horror at the levels of rape in South Africa, in particular the rape of babies and elderly women. Several participants also drew on the feminist account of rape being about power, and the patriarchal structure of male-female power relations in South Africa as well as practices relating to this were often criticised and argued to contribute to the high levels of rape in South Africa. However, despite most participants' overt opposition to rape in South Africa, there were several problematic arguments and assumptions about rape and rape victims that came out during the discussions. I will now give a brief overview of some of the important problems inherent in the discourses utilised.

**Victim blaming.** Despite the focus of the initial question on the perpetrators of rape, in certain groups a large portion of time was spent discussing women's behaviour and its relationship to rape. The primary victim blaming arguments were the notions that women's clothing can cause rape and that by drinking women provide men with the 'opportunity' to rape them. Such reasoning rests upon the widely supported notion that men are unable to control their sexual urges (Hollway, 1989) – a belief which allows for men to be perceived as not fully accountable for their sexual aggression – placing the onus of responsibility upon women to avoid 'getting themselves raped' (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). This in turn can have problematic consequences for the way in which we view both the victims and perpetrators of rape, the treatment they receive, and their experiences of their own victimisation/sexually aggressive behaviour. The presence of such arguments may worsen rape victims' experiences and act as a barrier to perpetrators rightfully being assigned responsibility for their crimes (ibid.).

**The sexual double standard.** Heterosex was constructed as being very different for both men and women, with very different consequences for each construction. There was a

clear presence of the ‘sexual double standard’, wherein men are praised for having multiple sexual partners whereas women are shamed for it. This standard has been criticised for the constraints it puts upon women’s sexuality as well as the pressure it exerts upon men to be sexually active.

**False accusations.** The difference between males’ and females’ experiences of sex was also used to depict women as being likely to make false reports of rape. Although contrary to the empirical evidence, this construction received strong support in several of the discussions. This reflects sexist notions that women are malicious and untrustworthy, and is clearly problematic regarding the response rape victims are likely to have when reporting their attacks.

**Culture and women’s rights.** The construction of heterosex as a transactional contract shed light upon the issue relating to culture and heterosex. Cultural rules in this instance were seen as legitimating practices which would legally have been considered rape and which deny women the right to refuse unwanted sex. Although sometimes aspects of ‘culture’ were criticised, it was argued in the analysis that constructions of male and female sexuality as culturally bound within static traditions can be problematic in terms of supporting patriarchal power relations and ignoring the experiences of rape victims.

**The poor, black rapist.** Intersections of the different discourses in the data lead to the most likely rapist constructed as being a poor, black man. This was seen as problematic both in terms of its feeding into racist and classist discourses (and thus perpetuating inequality) as well as its potential to contribute towards normalizing or excusing sexual violence for men within either or both of these categories. Conversely, the lack of focus on wealthy and white men was argued to be problematic in that it renders the sexual violence of men within either of these categories invisible.

**Masculinity and power.** Masculinity was constructed within the discussions as strongly linked to having power. This notion of masculinity as being equated with power was generally not explicitly articulated; rather it formed the underlying assumption of a number of accounts for why men rape. The taken-for-granted nature of this construction is problematic, in that space is not made available to question men’s ‘need’ for power. Rape is clearly a way in which only *men* are seen as reacting to disempowerment, and the *way* in which they are seen as reacting is telling in relation both to masculinity and to patriarchal gender relations. However, as men’s ‘need’ for power was not examined or problematized, the issues focused on as leading to rape were rather poverty, racial oppression and women’s empowerment, with gender alternatively constructed as being a secondary issue (if considered at all).

**Rape as maintaining a legitimate social order.** The notion of rape as being a legitimate response to women's insubordination was particularly concerning. This can be seen as supporting patriarchal ideology and women's oppression, as well as supporting the notion that men's raping of girls or women is sometimes an acceptable or appropriate behaviour.

This study therefore adds to the body of research in South Africa which suggests that problematic discourses surrounding masculinity and heterosex may be contributing to the issue of rape in the country in various ways, such as by encouraging male sexual aggression and female sexual passivity; enabling victim-blaming and perpetrator exculpation; minimising the rights and responsibilities of rape victims and perpetrators; and supporting patriarchal ideology and the notion that rape is justifiable under certain circumstances.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The problematic nature of some of the discourses used by male students in this study highlights that efforts to confront the problem of rape in South Africa need to challenge the underlying assumptions pertaining to masculinity within commonly utilised explanations for rape. In most of the discussion groups, the first responses to the question 'why do some men rape in South Africa?' reflected feminist ideas about rape being related to power, demonstrating the pervasiveness of this explanation in contemporary times. However, participants generally appeared more interested and invested in alternative accounts of rape, such as those drawing on the Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive. In terms of confronting problematic understandings of rape then, merely exposing men to the feminist account of rape is clearly not sufficient. Rather, the rape myths themselves should be targeted, in particular focusing on the underlying discourses which lay the foundation for these myths. Problematic discourses pertaining to masculinity and femininity as well as to heterosex need to be confronted. This is a difficult task considering the strength of the essentialist account of gender upon which they rest, yet it is nonetheless a critical endeavour.

While most participants expressed strong opposition to rape, many of these same participants utilised discourses which blamed women for their own rapes and normalised sexual aggression in men. As noted by Kaufman (1998), "Even as more and more [men] are convinced there is a problem [of men's violence against women], this realization does not touch the unconscious structures of masculinity" (p. 12). This demonstrates that simple opposition to rape is insufficient, and that many people who are explicitly 'against' rape may nevertheless be contributing to views which excuse and condone men's raping behaviour.

This research therefore highlights the necessity of demonstrating to such individuals how their own arguments form part of a system of meaning which is contributing to the problem of rape in this country.

Recently, there has been media furore and a national outcry concerning rape in South Africa, stemming for the most part from the brutal rape and murder of Anene Booysen in early 2013. Although long overdue, this attention has helped spark debate around the issue and has given airtime to some important and neglected issues regarding rape and gender-based violence. An important consideration relating to this case, however, is the fact that it was a murder/rape. Evidence from this study, as well as from other South African research, seems to suggest that in cases where it is ‘only’ rape many South Africans would not express the same outrage, or may not even label the act ‘rape’ (e.g. see Andersson et al., 2004; Jewkes et al, 2001; Wojcicki, 2002; Wood, 2005). Therefore, the evidence still seems to suggest that many South Africans’ attitudes and beliefs regarding sexual violence are far from the ‘outrage’ that the current public dialogue seems to suggest.

It has further been argued that one of the dangers of such outrage is that we distance ourselves from the problem and neglect to question those beliefs and practices in our own lives which form a part of our ‘rape culture’. De Vos (2013) commented on the nature of South Africa’s outrage, saying:

Expressions of outrage position us in opposition to the evil that we rush to condemn. Rapists are evil but unknown people “out there”. They are not our friends, our brothers, our fathers, our teachers, our sporting heroes. When we express our outrage about the prevalence of rape in society, I fear that we seek to affirm that we are not complicit in the (often violent) subjugation of women. Our expressions of outrage – well-meaning as such expressions might be – absolve us of our responsibilities. (Unpaginated)

This point is furthermore in line with the issue discussed earlier of the limitations of focusing on the individual pathology of rapists. Relating to Booysen’s case, the South African Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Lulu Xingwana, was quoted as saying, “We are saying to the court today there must be no bail for these criminals and *monsters*” (Miller, 2013, unpaginated, emphasis added). In such a way, the perpetrators of this crime were depicted as subhuman deviants (see Anderson & Doherty, 2008), as opposed to the products of a society which is rife with extreme levels of male-on-female violence. It can be argued that although perpetrators of such crimes against women must be



held accountable for their actions, such a focus on the deviance of these perpetrators ignores the broader social systems which feed into sexist and patriarchal ideologies which support rape culture and violence against women.

Alternatively, Lisak (1991) notes that by examining these ideological systems from a feminist perspective, it becomes clear that rape can be conceptualised as “a concrete acting out of culturally normative beliefs and images [in which] normal men [...] act out in individual dramas what their surrounding culture perpetrates institutionally” (p. 242).

Evidence from this study, as well as other research on masculinity and rape in South Africa, seems to suggest that this explanation may hold true for the South African context. Therefore, depicting rapists as subhuman monsters is both misleading and serves to distract from the important societal factors which have led South Africa to have such high levels of rape.

Rather, in order to work towards confronting the current rape epidemic, we need to examine the root of the problem as residing within those ‘accepted’ practices and beliefs within our society which support male power and women’s oppression and serve to normalise and legitimate male sexual violence.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Consent form

You are invited to take part in a research project about the issue of sexual violence in South Africa. This research is about what are some of the views of male students on the issue of sexual violence in South Africa. I am particularly interested in your views on why rape is so prevalent in South Africa, and on why some men in South Africa rape. Because this study aims to investigate what your views/beliefs are about this topic, nothing you contribute will be judged by the researcher as either “right” or “wrong”.

I am a psychological research Masters student from the University of Cape Town, and findings from this study will be used for my Masters dissertation.

#### Participation

- Participating in this study is voluntary.
- **You are free to stop participating in this study at any time** with no penalty or any other consequences.
- Any information you give to me is strictly confidential and you have the right to request that any information that you have given be removed from the study. However I cannot guarantee that the other members of the group will not reveal any of the information.
- Any statements you make that reveal your identity will not be used in the write-up of this research.
- You will be given R50 as compensation for your time for participating in this research.
- Participating in this study will involve a discussion group on the issue of sexual violence in South Africa, consisting of between four and seven male UCT students.
- A tape recorder will be used to record the discussion of the group. These recordings will later be transcribed (written down) and used for my Masters dissertation.

**Risks**

- Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, one of the risks involved is that you may find the discussion upsetting or stressful. In case this occurs, you are reminded **that you are free to leave at any time** without penalty, and that student health provides a counselling service (details provided to you) that you are advised to make use of if such distress persists.
- Another potential risk of focus groups is that a participant discloses something of a personal nature that at a later stage they feel uncomfortable with. You are therefore encouraged not to disclose anything you may feel uncomfortable with later, and are also informed that the nature of the topic of this study does not require you to disclose any personal information.

If you have any questions about the study, or decide that you would not like your contributions to the discussion used, you can contact or my research supervisor Dr Floretta Boonzaier (details provided to you).

Thank you.

**I have read and understood the above and I hereby agree to participate in this study.**

**Date:**

**Signature of participant:**

Signature of researcher (Brittany Everitt-Penhale):

**Appendix B: Consent for Recordings**

- This discussion will be recorded by a digital tape recorder.
- This will be transcribed and used for my Masters dissertation.
- No other person will have access to the recordings, and they will be stored on my personal computer.
- Any information that reveals the identity of any participant will not be written up in the transcript.
- If at the end of the discussion or at a later point there is anything that you wish to have erased from the tape, this will be done.

**I have read and understood the above and hereby agree to have my contribution recorded and used for this research**

**Date:**

**Signature of participant:**

Signature of researcher (Brittany Everitt-Penhale):

**Appendix C: Student Wellness Centre Information****Address:**

The Student Wellness Service

28 Rhodes Ave

Mowbray 7700

**Contact number:**

021 650 1017 / 1020

**Operating hours:**

Monday to Friday: 08h30 to 16h30

University of Cape Town

**Appendix D: Demographic information**

**For demographic purposes only**

Majors:

'Race':

Age:

Year of study:

University of Cape Town



[illegible]

## Appendix F: Non-Disclosure Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to maintain the confidentiality of information disclosed during the focus group session in any other manner as follows:

Definition - For these purposes, "Confidential Information" shall mean information or material obtained or observed while attending a focus group session that reveals the identities or the views of any of the participants. This includes:

- a) Any information about any participant in the focus group that is not currently in the public domain or readily available to the public.
- b) Any information which might lead to the identification of any member of the focus group.

The undersigned agrees to the above terms of this agreement.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix G: Extract from Group 3

G: So... let's say... um... Because, I mean okay, for most of us here you can already see that, the law's definition of rape... is ridiculous, right. Well I'm saying from... that's what I could see from... Okay I'm trying not to be racist but from like the... black guys here, and... being a, a country, like with the majority of black people... And I think those stats which you are referring to particularly are... *among* black people, right, and, if you were to get say... um, a cultural, like let's say Jacob Zuma maybe and would –actually to... *make* the laws, and *agree* with everybody that, 'okay, listen when you *force* a girl, this is rape' and... 'okay, this not', you know? People would actually *agree* with that more, than if you just tried to impose something... which seems to them *so* ridiculous.

Researcher: So, how do you think that influences, men, in South Africa to *rape*, or are you saying that you don't think, that it's happening at the levels...

G: Um... I can't be sure, 'cause the law's... Okay according to the law's definition, I'd say then it's probably higher. Because... I mean... It's... We... There's generally associate the term 'rape... Okay everyone like our... uniform definition of rape of *forcing*, you associate that more with thugs, but I think, the *law*'s definition of rape... most people, consider it – most black people, consider it normal. Even... the academics. I think.

H: I think we're neglecting to... to... to express a position of what *women* think of rape because the law's not just made in terms of the minority towards... towards people who don't have much influence, it's also made in terms of... judicial precedent and constitutions and... what individual people want so... the fact that there's no girls here defending their position is making this a discussion, which seems... a lot more skewed towards... um... what the law says, and colonial legacies and... stuff like... *race* and stuff like... culture, and society, but, *within* certain cultures I think... um... Like only *recently*, 'cause... the marginal- marginalisation of women isn't just a thing that's been, um, happening within certain races it's been happening *throughout* the races, so... in *that* instance as *well* like, it's only, it's a *recent* thing where women have become educated and... have given – have been given *faculties* to explore also what they want for themselves, so... it's, like the intellectual dividend for women has always been, something... that's *based* on what *men* think. But now they've been given an avenue in which they can think for *themselves* and say, 'this perhaps, it's what's been happening it's what's been *accepted* culturally

but that's because *men* have been defining what culture and society is as patriarchy'. But now it's coming to that point where women are deciding that... 'we don't want to... accept stuff and be slept with' and, they want, like... *Men* define themselves in terms of women, and *women* define themselves in terms of men, and... women *aren't*... no longer like *extensions* of what men are they're becoming independent and liberal in their thinking and stuff like that so, in *that* instance, what's lacking is, is... that sort of *empathy* and *sympathy* and... thinking of what, what *rape* means for a woman because... in that instance I think it would differ, *extremely* from what we think rape is, and stuff like that and, that's... the *rape* that we're discussing is the violence towards women, which is, which is... the *problem* in this instance and what's being researched I think.

